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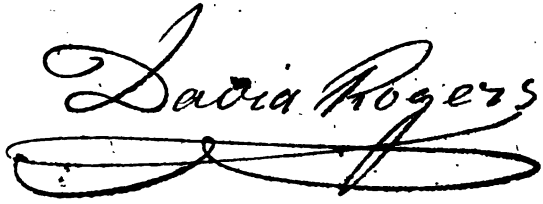
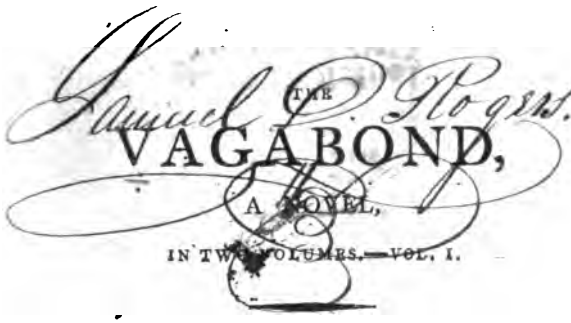


THE

VAGABOND,

A NOVEL.

VOL. I.



THE

VAGABOND,

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

BY

GEORGE WALKER.

DEDICATED TO THE

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

Third Edition, with Notes.

Τὸ δικαιον ἴσον ἀλλα μὴ τὸ ἴσον, δεῖν ποιεῖσθαι δικαιον.

Whatever is juſt, is equal; but whatever is equal is not always juſt. PLUTARCH.

The wayward nature of the time, and the paramount neceſſity of ſecuring to this kingdom her political and religious exiſtence, and the rights of ſociety, have urged me to this endeavour to preſerve them, by a diſintereſted appeal to my countrymen. PURSUITS OF LITERATURE.

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

WATSON,

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF,

THIS BOOK

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED.

My Lord,

In dedicating the preſent trifling performance to your Lordſhip, I am actuated by the ſame pride which glows in the boſom of a common ſoldier, who feels, and has at heart the ſucceſs of his

General. I am aware how inſignificant are my attempts to follow the track of your Lordſhip in the cauſe of genuine Religion, Morality, and Liberty; but perhaps a *Novel* may gain attention, when arguments of the ſoundeſt ſenſe and moſt perfect eloquence ſhall fail to arreſt the feet of the *Trifler* from the ſpecious paths of the new Philoſophy. It is alſo an attempt to parry the Enemy with their own weapons; for no channel is deemed improper by them, which can introduce their ſentiments.

I ſhould not flatter myſelf the following Pages would ever be honoured with peruſal, did I not know that no branch of Literature is left unexplored by your Lordſhip; and I might obſerve with the late Lord Orford, that Romances are only

only Hiſtories which we do not believe to be true, and Hiſtories are Romances we do believe to be true.

I am, with the greateſt Reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant,

GEORGE WALKER.

PREFACE.

THE following work is written with a desire of placing, in a *practical* light, some of the prominent absurdities of many self-important reformers of mankind, who, having heated their imaginations, sit down to write *political romances*, which never were, and never will be practical; but which, coming into the hands of persons as little

acquainted with human nature, the hiſtory of mankind, and the proofs of religious authenticity, as themſelves, hurry away the mind from common life into dreams of ideal felicity; or, by breaking every moral tie (while they declaim about morals), turn looſe their diſciples upon the world, to root up and overthrow every thing which has received the ſanction of ages, and been held ſacred by men of real genius and erudition.

Nothing is more eaſy, if we leave human nature and *common-place* reaſon out of the queſtion, than to write a ſyſtem of juriſ-

prudence, a perfect republic, a body of political juſtice, or a catalogue of rights: but a cloſe attention to any of theſe works will readily bring forward glaring and palpable contradictions. What are the various claſſes of mankind to think, when theſe men not only *contradict themſelves*, but every one has a ſyſtem widely oppoſite to the other, agreeing only that every regular order and inſtitution, religious, moral, and political, is worn out in this age of reaſon, and muſt be deſtroyed.

It may be right to appriſe the reader, that the words *political juſtice*

tice are ſcarce ever introduced, except when the ſentiment is taken from Mr. Godwin's Political Juſtice, 4to. edition.

No doubt thoſe who feel themſelves *ſore* will endeavour to caſt upon the work the charge of exaggeration; but, on this ſubject it is *impoſſible* to exaggerate; ſo inimical are the doctrines of Godwin, Hume, Rouſſeau, &c. to all civil ſociety, that, when the reader candidly reflects, he will perceive that the inferences I have drawn from *their* texts naturally reſult.

Can we wonder at the prevailance

ance of adultery, when doctrines ſuch as theſe men hold out in *faſcinating language*, are tolerated? Can we wonder at the vices and crimes of a neighbouring people? Or, can we wonder that the generality of *ſhallow*-thinking men embrace and ſupport them with ardour?

Many of the modern reformiſts, amongſt the moſt forward, Mr. Pain, aſſerts, that there is no ſuch exiſtence as a Britiſh Conſtitution. Let thoſe men and their adherents peruſe De Lolme on that ſubject; let all who are repining at their lot read that excellent work, and they will

will perceive the ſingular bleſſings they enjoy, which, becauſe they are familiar, are deſpiſed; and let us not act like men in health, who undermine their conſtitution by exceſs, till ſickneſs teaches them the ineſtimable value of what they have unthinkingly and irreparably deſtroyed.

PREFACE

PREFACE

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

IT has been ſuggeſted to me to print a *cheap* edition, which might be within the purchaſe of *all ranks*, and tend to open the eyes of many deluded followers of the *new* philoſophers. But though this work was written from the moſt ardent deſire of warning the world of the intentions

intentions and tendency of jacobinical principles, there are *two* reaſons for my objecting to this advice:—Firſt, as Mr. Playfair ſays in his excellent Hiſtory of Jacobiniſm, "He who *pleaded* the cauſe of murder and plunder, *ſaw his* work diſtributed by thouſands and hundreds of thouſands, and himſelf enriched; while he who endeavoured to ſupport the cauſe of law, of order, and of the proprietor, had his bookſeller to pay, and ſaw his labours converted into waſte paper. It is true he had the conſolation of his own mind, and the eſteem of the few to whom his intentions were known; but with regard to effect

effect upon the public mind it produced none: his main object was therefore unattained, and the revolutionary argument remained triumphant.—With energy, ſome money, and a diſpoſition to make uſe of it on one ſide; and on the other, indolence with pecuniary means in abundance, but not the *will* to employ one ſhilling of it: can we be ſurpriſed that things went in favour of thoſe who had the energy and the will? It would have been ſurpriſing if it had not: and accordingly we have ſeen the ſhirtleſs, ſhoeleſs *vagabond*, burning the caſtles and title-deeds of the proprietor, and with an high hand put themſelves

ſelves in the place. Let the rich aſk, Which ſide will have moſt writers, thoſe who pay, or thoſe who do not?"—Secondly, through the medium of Circulating Libraries, any man may read the work for much leſs, than though it were printed on paper like the Rights of Man.

In the preſent inſtance, however, I cannot ſpeak from what I have experienced, and it gives me conſiderable hopes that the deſtructive torpor of the rich is evaporating, and that they begin to take an active intereſt in the preſent criſis: I have only to obſerve, that Two Editions have

have been ſold in leſs than ſix months.

Mr. Playfair, when he is ſpeaking of the diffidence, and diſtruſt, and jealouſy, and indifference of the different nations, ſays: "But if they will not prepare ſeriouſly to reſiſt, they muſt prepare to ſuffer; for France will give law to Europe if ſhe once gets the better, and then adieu to thoſe Principalities and Powers who have quarrelled about uſeleſs etiquette, when they ſhould have rivalled each other in MANLY COURAGE: and who will continue in all likelihood to diſpute about their rights and privileges, till there remain

remain none for them to diſpute about."

It is here that the conduct and character of Great Britain *deſerves well* of mankind. But for the energy of this nation, Europe would, ere this, have been *ſqueezed* to pieces with the *Gallic hug*: and this country would have ſwelled its bloated pride.—But the VOLUNTEERS have ſaved the nation. They have told France, that before ſhe can *plunder and burn London, that ſelfiſh and ſhop-keeping city*, according to the threat of Barrere, ſhe muſt float in the air, and march through a foreſt of pikes and bayonets.

onets. They have told the French Propagande that we are not to be cajoled with flatteries and lies to believe a people, who conquer more by theſe means than by the ſword; and they have told the idle and rebellious, that they cannot hope for ſucceſs. While we remain firm to ourſelves, we may ſuffer much, but cannot be brought under the yoke of France.

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THE

VAGABOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEETING OF TWO REPUBLICAN PHILOSOPHERS.

ONE fine summer evening Doctor Alogos walked out to the banks of Wynander Meer, to enjoy the beautiful scenery surrounding, and reflected in the mirror of the crystal lake.

'This is charming,' ſaid he to himſelf, as he walked onward; 'the harmony of nature is viſible in every object round me; the clouds form a majeſtic and ever-varying canopy; man alone deviates from that pure ſtate of exiſtence he knew in the golden age; man alone is unhappy; his paſſions and his appetites in ſociety know no bounds ſhort of attainment; and why? becauſe he will not copy the example of unerring nature in her conduct of animals. Theſe never deviate into rapine and outrage—they live free, and are happy.'

At that moment he heard a noiſe in the air, and, looking round, diſtinguiſhed an hawk in full purſuit after a lapwing. The harmleſs creature fluttered, and appeared nearly exhauſted, while the bird of prey redoubled his exertions.—Doctor Alogos, who uſually walked with a fowling-piece for his amuſement,

amuſement, brought the hawk down at a ſhot; and the lapwing, as if to thank him, ſettled near upon the ground. In a little time it recovered from its fright, and a fine worm creeping before it fell a prey to *inſtinct*.

The Doctor muſed on this ſubject as he continued his walk.—'At worſt,' ſaid he, 'this is only a partial evil, and does not interrupt the harmony of the univerſe; it is only matter changing form, and making room in the great field of nature for new exiſtences; if we had no hawks, in twenty years the whole ſurface of the earth would be covered with lapwings; and if we had no lapwings, the whole globe would be ſo over-run with worms, that, like a Cheſhire cheeſe filled with mites, the cruſting would crumble away. It is neceſſary the ſtronger animals ſhould prey upon the weaker, and quite in the order of things: but for men to murder each

other is very different, and ariſes from an unjuſt accumulation of property. Oh happy times when *property* was unregarded, when no tyrant could plant his foot upon an acre of ground, and repulſe his fellow from the ſod! Property! property! thou art the bane of earthly good, an ulcer in ſociety, and a cancer in the political œconomy.'

As the Doctor ſtamped his foot on the ground in the attitude of an orator, heated with the idea of revolution and equality, a young man in a very ragged dreſs leaped from a thicket of hazels, and, holding a piſtol to the Doctor's breaſt, demanded his money.

The Doctor's piece was unloaded, or his benevolence for the human ſpecies might have been loſt in the agitation of ſurprife; but making a full pauſe, and gazing at his antagoniſt—'This,' ſaid he, 'is not right in the nature of

things; force tells me that your argument is wrong: you ſhould have firſt convinced me of your wants, and then my purſe would have been your juſt property.'

'All property is a monopoly,' cried the young metaphyſician, 'and the moſt laconic arguments are beſt: theſe rags which I wear are ſufficient vouchers for my wants; and unleſs you can prove that ſome other has a greater claim to your property, I muſt have the contents of your pocket.'

'You are a philoſopher,' ſaid the Doctor.

'Yes,' replied the youth; 'my dear Stupeo uſed to tell me ſo: but philoſophy is not rewarded in the preſent deteſtable ſyſtem of things; virtue is ridiculed, and vice rides in gilded coaches.'

'How much do you need?' ſaid the Doctor, in tranſport. 'You are a pupil of the *new ſchool*; come along with me, and you ſhall find me a man who will eſteem you exactly according to the quantity of merit you poſſeſs; your talents ought not to be thus loſt.'

'Stupeo was perfectly right,' ſaid the youth, 'he told me that all men are equal: I will go with you.'—'Who is this Stupeo?' inquired the Doctor, while the young man walked by his ſide. 'He was a very great philoſopher, a mythologiſt, a metaphyſician, and a ſcholar: he was my tutor at college.'

'You a collegian!' cried the Doctor, in ſurpriſe; 'how came you in this miſerable condition, and how could you commit ſuch an act of dangerous outrage?'—'From the moſt natural reaſon in the world: all crime, my dear Sir, ariſes from ſome poſſeſſing what

what others want: but in fact, there is no ſuch thing as crime; it is a mere chimera, exiſting only in the law, like John Doe and Richard Roe.'

'There ſurely are crimes,' interrupted the Doctor, 'crimes againſt political juſtice, and the liberty of the individual: as for inſtance, I have, as a willing animal, a right or power to take a walk; but if I am to be aſſaſſinated every time I go out, my liberty is reſtrained, my houſe becomes a priſon, and I might as well be in a dungeon. I think crimes of this nature ought to be puniſhed.'

'How? By coercion or reſtraint?—My dear Stupeo uſed to ſay that puniſhment is a ſpecious name, but is in reality nothing more than force, put upon one being by another who happens to be ſtronger. How can truth be promoted by this? If I am hanged for what is

called a robbery, how am I convinced of my error? And it is the reform of the individual you ſhould ſeek, and not the puniſhment of an action partial in its nature.'

'You are wrong,' ſaid the Doctor; 'the offender ought to be reſtrained as long as the ſafety of the community preſcribes it; for this is juſt: reſtrain him not an inſtant from a ſimple view to his own improvement, for this is contrary to reaſon and morality*.'

'But, my dear Sir,' cried the youth, warmly, 'Stupeo, who was a philoſopher and a metaphyſician, ſays——'

'Says a fiddleſtick,' retorted the Doctor, 'it is the good of the whole we

* See page 132 and 161 of Political Juſtice, where the two laſt contradictory abſurdities will be found verbatim.

are

are to ſeek; what ſignifies individuals? they are as mites in the univerſe. Truth, truth muſt be propagated, and I glory to ſee we are making ſuch rapid progreſs.'

They were by this time arrived at the gate of a neat-looking manſion, with high chimneys and heavy cornices, which declared it to have been erected in the time of William the Third, a flower garden ſpread before it, in which a beautiful young woman was gathering flowers. She appeared about eighteen, with all the innocence of that period, and the beauty attending upon health and good nature.

'Your daughter, I ſuppoſe?' ſaid the ſtranger.

'No,' replied the Doctor; 'do you think I would belie my principles by uniting myſelf for life to any object,

when the human mind is of ſo changeable a nature?—She is my niece; her parents, who were very poor and very ignorant, are dead. I attempted to educate her on my plan; but ſhe is of a perverſe diſpoſition, ſhe will not exert the divine privilege of reſiſtance, and throw off the ſhackles of domination: ſhe perſiſts that the very difference of ſexes ſhould teach us that they are deſigned for different purſuits.'

'Laura,' cried the Doctor, 'have you ſet my room in order? I have brought home a ſtranger.'

'No,' replied Laura, bluſhing; 'I was obliged to viſit a poor old woman in the village; and I intended, as ſoon as I had gathered ſome flowers, to arrange your apartment.'

'The d—l take all the old women in the univerſe,' cried the Doctor, in a paſſion,

paſſion, 'with their diſeaſes and their wants! What had you to do, you idle ſlut, with gathering flowers, when all my room is covered with litter? What a wretched ſtate is ſociety!—every thing thwarting the temper, and ſpoiling our reflections.'

'In a ſtate of nature,' ſaid the young ſtranger, 'we ſhould certainly have fewer wants. The pleaſant ſpring would ſupply us with drink, and the maſt of the foreſt with food. How happy would it be if all mankind, by univerſal conſent, would deſtroy every veſtige of ſociety, and return to ſimple nature!'

'Nothing more true,' cried Doctor Alogos, taking his hand and leading him towards the houſe; 'you ſeem a youth of profound intelligence, and I glory in having diſcovered ſuch a gem. All the children of men are dear to my heart; and my indignation boils when

I hear that our brethren of Africa are urged to labour with a laſh—torn from ſupreme felicity—carried from the yellow ſands of Guinea to the burning furnace of the Weſt-Indies—and all for what? to ſupply us ſpices and ſweetmeats. I could hug a Tartar to my breaſt, and divide my little property with a Greenlander.'

A wounded ſoldier at that moment accoſted them from the gate, entreating a morſel of bread, or a farthing to buy it with.

The Doctor's countenance reddened, and turning round—'Go,' cried he, 'to your pariſh; for what do I pay ſo many poor's rates, if my purſe is to be always open to ſuch vagrants? In a ſtate of nature there is no neceſſity for ſoldiers; and I am determined I will not ſupport the preſent infamous ſyſtem.' So ſaying, he ſlapped the door in the ſoldier's

ſoldier's face; and leading his new friend up ſtairs, they entered an elegant apartment, the furniture of which was in a ſtyle of the greateſt luxury.

'Is ſupper ready?' inquired the Doctor of a ſervant girl, who entered the room to place his chair.—'It won't be ready this half hour,' replied ſhe, pertly: 'if you want it ſooner, you muſt come and help to get it yourſelf.'

'Go along, you baggage,' ſaid the Doctor, laughing. Then turning to his gueſt, 'This,' ſaid he, 'is a girl of independent ſpirit, the genuine equality for which I admire her. If my niece were a little more of her diſpoſition, I ſhould be extremely fond of her—not for herſelf, becauſe I am above all thoſe falſe notions of relative connection, but for her virtues.'

Supper

Supper was ſoon after ſerved in a ſtyle that would have gratified an epicure. The Doctor declaimed, between every bite, on the virtues of temperance and the beauties of nature.—The young man ate little, being engaged with the beauties of Laura: and the latter was much abaſhed by the company of a ſtranger, who, though in a garb that declared preſent poverty, had yet a nobleneſs of phyſiognomy, which ſhone forth beneath the cloud that enſhrouded him.

Having ſufficiently ſatisfied the demands of nature and appetite, the Doctor ordered his niece to retire; and having repleniſhed the table with wine, which he obſerved was taxed in an infamous manner, he requeſted the ſtranger to relate the outlines of his hiſtory.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH AND PHILOSOPHY IN AN IGNORANT MIND.

MY name is Frederick Fenton. I might perhaps be aſhamed to mention my family, when you ſee me in theſe miſerable garments; but truth muſt be ſpoken without regard to thoſe falſe prejudices, which call folly by the name of honour.

My parents have great landed poſſeſſions, that is, are great tyrants, in the county of Kent. They educated me in all the ſuperſtitions of the Proteſtant church, and my whole ſtudy was to

to conform to their deſires, and reſtrain my wiſhes to the line of what they called rectitude and religion.

I was ſo groſsly ignorant, as to believe that diſobeying them was diſpleaſing to the Almighty; and I conſidered religion as a ſure means of leading me to a better world, and making me hereafter happy: but theſe were the dreams of unenlightened imagination, impreſſed upon me by education.

Learning appeared in my eyes the greateſt object of human attainment; and my parents delighting in my progreſs, my whole powers were bent to the acquirement of what they called valuable knowledge.

I did not then know that profound ignorance is the real and only ſtate in which men can enjoy felicity; and that every

every advance from this is ſo far diverging from the intention of nature.

I was never eaſy under the neglect of a duty, becauſe I either feared the cenſure of my parents, or the vengeance of an offended deity: and I refrained for theſe reaſons from committing any of thoſe actions falſe morality particularly conſiders atrocious. So eager was my application to ſtudy, and ſo tenacious my memory, that at fifteen I was judged capable of commencing ſtudent in form.

I took leave of my parents with tears; and my boſom ſeemed to loſe its tranquillity at parting with a youth nearly my own age, and who had been my friend and companion from infancy. Vernon was not leſs affected; and we vowed eternal amity at our ſeparation.

At the recommendation of a nobleman, the divine Stupeo became my preceptor. He was a perſon of mean birth; but that diſtinction I deſpiſed, ſeeing in him only a man of talents.

He began his plan of education, with ſtarting bold truths, which ſhocked and dazzled me with their luſtre, without confounding my perceptions. 'I will not,' ſaid he, 'overwhelm you at once with the whole blaze of knowledge, though I would as little wiſh to lead you ſtep by ſtep, as though I would ſurpriſe you to an acquieſcence with truth: immortal truth can never loſe by being ſeen; it bears down every barrier; it is a mighty torrent; it may be ſtayed for a while, but the acceleration of its rapidity will increaſe in equal ratio.'

At firſt I ventured to obſerve, that the human mind is too often led into

error

error by a deception of the ſenſes, which are ever ready to adopt any new object however abſurd. His eloquence, which was like the torrent he deſcribed, ſoon overcame my weak objections, and the firſt gleam of truth and philoſophy dawned upon my ſoul.

He lamented the profound obedience I paid to my parents. 'My dear pupil,' ſaid he, 'what is this bondage you call duty? And what right have thoſe beings you call father and mother to direct your actions, and controul the inborn vigour of your ſoul?'

'By the claim of nature; by the trouble they have taken for my preſervation; and by the love they bear me in particular,' ſaid I.

'Unjuſt in extreme!' cried he. 'Do your parents love you for your real value?—No! it is ariſtocracy, ſelf-love,

love, and family pride that teach them to ſet a value on you. No human being ought to be preferred becauſe that being is my father, my wife, or my ſon*; it is the good of the whole we ſhould endeavour to promote. And what is your claim of nature? Are not all men born free? Children can be no longer connected with their father, than while they ſtand in need of his aſſiſtance. When this becomes needleſs, the natural tie is of courſe diſſolved, the children are exempted from the obedience they owe their father, and the father is equally ſo from the ſolicitude due from him to his children; both aſſume a ſtate of independence reſpecting each other†.'

'But gratitude,' replied I, 'would ſeem to inſpire reverence and eſteem.'

* Political Juſtice. † Rouſſeau.

'Gratitude!

'Gratitude! — Nonſenſe,' anſwered he; 'I ought to eſteem a benefactor, not becauſe he has done a kindneſs to me, but becauſe he has done it to an human being*.'

'But if what my parents requeſt is for my own advantage, ſurely there can be no crime in obeying?'

'Of that you are the beſt judge: if the action be good, it ſhould be done becauſe it is ſo, and not becauſe certain perſons have requeſted or commanded you to do it. But even this you ought to doubt: to doubt is the firſt ſtep to be a great philoſopher, and the more you doubt, the more real knowledge you are poſſeſſed of. For inſtance, you will call that an apple lying on your table becauſe it appears ſo: but you muſt doubt it; your eyes, your taſte is falli-

* Godwin.

ble—

ble—it may be an orange, or it may be nothing—it may be any thing.'

'It may not be a church or the Alpine mountains,' faid I.

'But you muft not believe it to be neither, for thofe who believe *any thing* certainly are fools*.'

'I am convinced,' faid I. 'I doubt whether I ever had a father, or ever was born: I will no longer be held in the leading-ftrings of obedience.'

Youth has a natural paffion for entertainment; and having now caft off the trammels of parental admonition, I determined to enjoy thofe moments which my dear Stupeo taught me would never return. 'How few are our years, and of thofe years how few are allowed

* Hume on Human Nature, vol. i. page 168.

to

to pleaſure!' would he ſay. 'Graſp then, my pupil, the moments as they fly, for all beyond this life is annihilation and non-entity: dry and barren ſtudy is well enough for muddy ſouls, but not for thoſe who know how to live.'

It is ſurpriſing with what conviction truth flaſhes upon the mind:—Stupeo's axioms were unrefutable, and I found the ſuperiority of pleaſure over all the laborious and muſty reſearches of learning, which never ſatisfy a doubting philoſophic mind.

I confeſs I ran into a few eccentricities, ſuch as breaking the leg of a waiter in a drunken frolic—getting a fever by a ſurfeit—and ſpending my ſalary before it became due: but theſe are the neceſſary attendants on this miſerable ſyſtem of things. We are ſo enervated with *drinking tea*, that we cannot withſtand the power of fixed air

in

in fluids: and the monopoly of property prevents our ſpending more than we can acquire.

Theſe reflections naturally led me to abhor tyranny of every kind. It is ſingular how we imbibe great truths when once the mind doubts of every thing. The genius of liberty ſhone more reſplendent in mine eyes, and I groaned at the ſufferings of my fellow men. I ſaw that no poſſible right could bind any man in ſlavery. What power had any generation of men to ſell their poſterity (no matter who bought them)? When had I *given my conſent* to the government I lived under? Never; and therefore to me it was as *abſolute* a deſpotiſm as any under the ſun*. It was no conſequence to me that it might be juſt and well adminiſtered; to me it was a tyranny. I confeſs there ſeemed

* Pain.

a trifling

a trifling argument againſt this *new truth*; for it ſeemed a matter of difficulty, that the government ſhould be ſending to every individual, as he attained certain years, to know if he approved their eſtabliſhment. But in the beſt of ſyſtems there is always ſome little defect, and ſurely Voltaire, Rouſſeau, Tom Paine, and the metaphyſician Stupeo, knew which was for the beſt. 'I even doubt,' ſaid the latter, 'whether the very article of our birth be not a great breach of political juſtice, ſince our conſent was not required.'

He was a moſt exquiſite reaſoner; I remember him expatiating one day on the happineſs of natural liberty: he kindled into enthuſiaſm on the ſubject. 'War,' cried he, 'that deſtroys our vitals, and in one moment ſilences eloquence, genius, and every virtue with the howlings of miſery, murder, and deſpair, would never exiſt but for the

machinations of monarchs. When did you ever hear of republics going to war? what have they to fight about*?'

'Did the Tyrians, the Grecians, the Romans, the Carthaginians never go to war?' ſaid I. But Stupeo knew his ground too well to be ſtopped by ſo *trifling* a queſtion: he continued—'The reciprocal relations of mankind, while living together in their primitive independence, were not ſufficiently durable to conſtitute a ſtate either of peace or war, ſo that *men* cannot be naturally enemies. It is the relation ſubſiſting *between things*, and *not between men*, that gives riſe to war; which ariſing not from *perſonal* but *real* relations, cannot ſubſiſt between man and man, either in a ſtate of nature or in a ſtate of ſociety,

* It may not be unworthy obſervation, that the French *Republic* has conquered *all* the little *republics* round them, and only the two monarchies of Sardinia and Naples.

in

in which every thing is ſecured by the Laws*. Thus it being evident, that as men never can be at variance with men, for as much as no ſavages in a ſtate of nature ever fight; it follows, that war never could happen, but for the quarrels of a ſet of tyrants, who lead men into the field of battle to butcher each other with their eyes ſhut.'

'Then man becomes a mere machine?' ſaid I.

'Man a machine!' ſaid he, with ardour: 'man is a ſublime animal; the great lord of creation: 'tis true his ſoul is nothing but an heap or collection of different perceptions, or objects, united

* This inconſiſtent ſentence makes a brilliant figure in the Social Contract. The reader is not to be ſurpriſed if he finds theſe great men contradict themſelves in the courſe of the work; if they did not, they would not be modern philoſophers.

together by *certain relations*, and ſuppoſed, though falſely, to be endowed with perfect ſimplicity and identity. If any one, upon ſerious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himſelf, I muſt confeſs I can reaſon with him no longer: he may perhaps perceive ſomething ſimple, and continued, which he calls *himſelf*, though I am *certain* there is no ſuch principle in me. But ſetting aſide ſome metaphyſicians of this kind (who believe they have a ſoul), I may venture to affirm of the reſt of mankind, that they are *nothing* but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which ſucceed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement*.'

'But,' ſaid I, 'you tell me you are *certain* you have no ſoul, and yet you

* Hume on Human Nature, vol. i. page 361 and 438.

lay

fay it down as a maxim, that we are not to be certain of any thing. This is ſure a contradiction. Beſide, if this bundle of ideas is always changing, and never the ſame, what is memory? How am I conſcious that I ate my breakfaſt this morning, and got drunk laſt night?'

'Tis merely in idea,' replied he; 'you cannot be certain you did either. All ideas are only ſlighter impreſſions than realities, and there is no other difference between reality and idea*.'

'Then,' ſaid I, 'the idea of an inch, muſt be an inch long, and of a mile, a mile long. If I have an idea of a roaring lion, or a thunder ſtorm, I ſhall hear the ſounds, only in ſmaller degree. I have an idea of two bottles of brandy, and the impreſſion will ſurely

* Hume on Human Nature, vol. i. page 361 and 438.

equal the effect of two bottles of wine; but do I feel any actual difference between an idea of the frozen pole or the bowels of Mount Etna? am I colder or warmer for either? Does the idea of a bombardment lay me dead upon the plain? which it must do if it were as you say, that reality and idea are in every respect the same, except that the former strikes with more force than the latter*.'

'You will *believe* every thing I have said,' he answered, 'if you *doubt* your own understanding; and nothing is more fallible than human reason, or more certain than immutable truth.'

In this new path of philosophy I made so much progress, that I soon ceased to trouble myself with the jargon of the schools; Aristotle, Grotius, and

* See Beattie's excellent Treatise on Truth.

Puffendorf

Puffendorf appeared as ſo many children, and even the great Locke, but an infant in ſcience. Latin and Greek became the moſt inſipid of ſtudies; and in fact my moments were too precious to be waſted on ſuch trifles.

My father wrote me ſeveral letters expreſſive of his grief at my change of principles, and hinting that he would diſcharge Stupeo, if I attended to his infernal doctrines.

'And ſo,' cried the great logical metaphyſician, 'you will ſtoop to the domination of this man, who wiſhes to cramp the divine impulſes of your ſoul, to torpedo your faculties! Other tyrants would be content with governing your body; but this man, who calls himſelf your father, would depreſs the energies of your ſoaring ſpirit, and tear it down from beholding the ſplendid ſun

of reaſon and truth, to walk in the common track of plodding men.'

What reaſoning could be more juſt, or delivered in more eloquent terms? I wrote in reply, that my mind was free, that I deteſted controul, and would not ſubmit to the directions of any tyrant, however diſtinguiſhed by name.

My father returned me an anſwer in the mildeſt terms: he requeſted me to conſider how much attention he had beſtowed upon me in my early years. He aſked how I ſhould think of the man, who ſhould return any favour I did him, with equal neglect and contempt. He entreated me to conſider if any of his former advice had been in any ways detrimental to my own welfare; and to reflect, that no poſſible advantage could ariſe to him from my proceeding in a virtuous life, except that

that of beholding one whom he had been a means of bringing into the world, an honour to his country, to human nature, and to himself. He concluded with entreating me to meet him at a certain house upon the road, where he would communicate to me matters of great importance; and should set out from home (though very unwell) the moment he received my promise to meet him.

Stupeo was on a party of pleasure when I received this letter. I am almost ashamed to own the impression it made upon me, though it is all in the old-fashioned style; but we cannot at once wholly overcome every prejudice of education.

I wrote immediately, that I would attend at the place appointed. I delayed till Stupeo arrived. He was surprised to find me ready for a journey,

and more ſo when I informed him of the particulars.

'Weak, puerile, and inconſtant man,' cried he, 'you reſolve in one hour what you undo the next. It was either fitting that you ſhould yeſterday have bowed to the commands of your father, or it is not fitting to-day: time cannot change a moral action. What is it he requires? To bend you to his will—to make you the paſſive tool of his power: He would perſuade you all he has done was for your ſake. Who are you? an individual! his property! — A maſter gives phyſic to his ſlave, and pretends he has no intereſt in doing ſo. Nonſenſe! it is the good of the whole he ſhould ſeek.'

'But I have *promiſed* to meet him; and I would not willingly forfeit my word.'

'All promiſes are morally wrong, and

and ought not to be kept. The action to be done, is either right or it is wrong. If it is right, it ſhould be done without an eye to a promiſe; and if it is wrong, nó promiſe can make it right. For inſtance, I ſend word to a merchant I ſhall meet him on 'Change, and I find more pleaſure in ſome other excurſion, or ſome action of greater good (in my mind) appears for me to do. I ought not to meet the merchant;—his inconvenience I am ignorant of, and I can no more be ſaid to be accountable for any thing he ſhall ſuffer from the diſappointment, than I am guilty of murder for not being on a trial at Newcaſtle, when I knew of no ſuch trial, though my evidence ſhould have ſaved the man. All that can be ſaid is, that people would then in theſe caſes depend more upon themſelves, and leſs upon others*.'

* Political Juſtice.

'But,' said I, 'how is business to be done, if no man has a certainty of meeting with those he has to transact some concern of the first importance with?'

'What is business, what is commerce, when compared with moral virtue and political justice? 'Tis the good of the whole, my dear Frederick, and not the petty interest of individuals, we are to consider. We ought never to do an action without first calculating the resulting good, and considering if some greater good may not be done.—You are dressed, and to tell you the truth, for we ought always and in all instances to speak truth, I this night am going to Mrs. Ell's, where you will see a charming girl: she has not been introduced a month, and you will not regret the loss

of ——————. Come, my dear fellow, ſhake off all theſe old ſuperſtitious notions, and taſte real and genuine liberty.'

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW MORALITY OF FRIENDSHIP, HONOUR, AND PHILANTHROPY.

SOME days after, I received a letter from my father, informing me, that the diſappointment he had received, with the fatigue of the journey in his weak ſtate of health, had ſo much raiſed his fever, that he had little hopes of recovering his health; and that if I yet retained the ſmalleſt ſpark of filial piety, I would inſtantly haſten to him.

I was at firſt ſhocked with the event; but it was evidently not owing to me, but

but to the improper journey he had taken; for to ſay the diſappointment could have ſuch an effect, was talking like a nervous old woman. I was eaſily convinced by Stupeo that it was all a trick: and indeed I was in no condition to undertake a journey into Kent; the charming girl who had not been a month introduced, having given me ſufficient reaſon to remember her innocence.

'What a ſhocking effect!' ſaid Stupeo; 'but you ought to doubt its reality.'

'To doubt it?' cried I: 'No, no, I have no reaſon to doubt.'

'But it may only exiſt in your idea, and that idea affects you.'

'Affects me! How?' ſaid I. 'What, if I have an idea that my throat is cut, ſhall

ſhall I find the blood ſtreaming about me?'

'It all ariſes from the preſent miſerable ſyſtem of things,' ſaid Stupeo; 'a deſpotiſm is the very worſt of governments.'

'But what has deſpotiſm to do with it?' cried I peeviſhly; 'am not I burning with all the flames of a volcano? and ſhould I not have been well at this moment if I had attended my father? Pray how does this riſe from the government?'

'I'll maintain,' ſaid Stupeo with metaphyſical coolneſs, 'this and every thing elſe that is bad ariſes from it. If genuine liberty were eſtabliſhed, all the female ſex would be within our choice; we ſhould not have to venture——— What buſineſs has one man to monopoliſe a woman to himſelf? Affection and

and love is as various as any other paſſion. What are the names of mother, and wife, and daughter, and ſiſter? In a ſtate of nature men purſue their own inclinations, and not each graſp a female being to himſelf, the ſlave of his caprice, and the object of his diſguſt.—Over this imaginary prize, men watch with perpetual jealouſy; and one man will find his deſires and his capacity to circumvent as much excited, as the other is excited to traverſe him:—as long as this ſtate of ſociety continues, *philanthropy* will be croſſed and checked in a thouſand ways*.'

'That muſt be a very admirable ſtate of things,' I replied; 'but at preſent what are we to do, when our philanthropy muſt be practiſed in private? for it is a very dear article at Weſtminſter Hall. I am almoſt tempted to

* Political Juſtice.

think

think it a judgment of Providence upon illicit connection.'

'Providence!' repeated he; 'is it poſſible you can really be ſuch a child in ſcience? In the eighteenth century to talk of Providence, is a mark of the profoundeſt ignorance. Do you think then that there is a great and omnipotent Being who cares for ſuch a bundle of atoms as you are? All prieſtcraft and lies. Does any thing tell you that you ſhall live hereafter?'

'I have an idea that I ſhall; and all ideas muſt be realities, only in a ſlighter degree, if the doctrine of the *faſhionable* Hume be true.'

'Not in this caſe. Your exiſtence will terminate when the lobes of the lungs are no longer inflated, and the blood ceaſes to beat in the arteries. The union of the ſpirit with the body is

is a mere fortuitous connection, happened wholly by chance, and will terminate in like manner.'

'But,' returned I, 'nature ſeems embelliſhed with a thouſand beauties, that ſurely are not the reſult of chance. In the formation of one ſingle flower, how inſenſibly does the ſtem increaſe, the leaves unfold, and the flowers expand! Were theſe the effects of chance, we ought to ſee the particles which form the component parts, ſettling from the air into the ſhapes of plants, trees, horſes, and geeſe; nor ſhould we ever ſee two animals or plants of the ſame ſpecies.'

Stupeo pauſed a moment, but he never wanted reſources in the extenſive ſtores of his mind. 'All this,' ſaid he, 'proceeds from phyſical *neceſſity* and the nature of things: you impel a ball along a ſmooth ſurface, and it muſt proceed

proceed in a fixed progreſs; ſo nature has given to all things an impulſe which never ceaſes to act. The ſame quantity of matter and ſpirit exiſts now that did exiſt at the firſt, though it is ever varying in form. In the firſt kernel, in the firſt egg, was contained the germ of all other kernels and eggs, of all the plants, and all the chickens, requiring only the progreſs of time to unfold them: and the firſt man contained in him all the men that ever did or ever will exiſt*.'

'But how that firſt could ever exiſt without a creating power, is to me incomprehenſible. We do not ſee new ſpecies of animals produced by nature in our time; we never find men with their heads juſt riſing above ground, like the children of *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*, or the teeth which *Cadmus* ſet

* Buffon.

in

in the mud. It would be a convincing argument, if we were ever to find the horns of animals rising like plants before us in our walks. Indeed, my dear Stupeo, you must allow a great first cause.'

'Nature is all powerful,' said Stupeo.

'But what is nature? To be a powerful cause, it must have *will*; it must be a Deity; and I care not whether you call this mighty being Nature, Providence, or God.'

'Those who believe any thing are fools,' replied he: 'matter and motion may be regarded as the cause of thought*: every thing arises from matter and motion.'

* Hume on Human Nature, vol. i. page 468. and 434.

'But

'But what is motion? And what is the cauſe of motion?' ſaid I.

'Prieſts,' he replied, 'have led the mind, through their knowledge of its paſſions. They have introduced Hell to controul us by the horrors of future puniſhment. But the burning-glaſs of truth has ſtruck the temple of prejudice and prieſtcraft; the fabric totters to the baſe, it will ſhortly fall, and cruſh all tyrants in its ruins.'

I could not but obſerve, that he had evaded my queſtions, but that was an effort of his exquiſite wit and talent for diſputation. It was impoſſible any one could reſiſt the torrent of his eloquence; and my imagination was warmed by the glorious and brilliant idea of the temple of ſuperſtition tumbling down, and cruſhing tyranny in its ruins. I forgot my ſufferings in the proſpect, ſighing alone in the fear that mankind

mankind were not yet ſufficiently enlightened. Indeed I have to lament, that I find too many ſelf-intereſted people, who prefer the *miſanthropic* way of living in families, watching their wives and daughters like ſo many dragons guarding the Heſperian fruit, and hoarding up that wealth which thouſands would be rejoiced to ſhare. But the time will come, when knowledge is diſſeminated in all ranks; when the ploughman ſhall ſit on his plough reading the Rights of Man, and all books of law and religion ſhall be burnt by the magiſtrates. Then, then, my dear Sir, liberty ſhall triumph! and ariſtocracy and property vaniſh together!

It was a long time before I recovered my health and ſtrength; and my father finding he could not bully me into his narrow principles, ſent a diſmiſſal to Stupeo. That great and good man could not bear to take a perſonal farewel of his

his pupil, but departed in the evening, two days after his diſcharge, taking with him a gold repeater of mine, which his delicacy would not let him aſk as a memorial.—The loſs of my dear Stupeo would have been dreadful, had I not imbibed ſufficient knowledge to proceed without a guide; the light of nature being ſufficient for thoſe who will follow her impulſes, unbiaſſed by vulgar errors.

I endeavoured to *ſpread the truth** with all my powers; but the old fellows thinking their places in danger, and alarmed at the thunders of reaſon and the fulminations of ſcience, expelled me the college, and I returned to my father's houſe.

There I reſolved to live as much as poſſible in conformity to reaſon, with-

* A cant phraſe of all Reformers.

out

out ſtooping to the forms of cuſtom. Nature is the beſt regulator, and I was not obliged to eat and drink becauſe the hand of the clock pointed to ſuch a ſet of figures; or to eat pork, when my appetite preferred mutton.

My mother, who was a weak ſilly old woman, was always crying at my whims (as my father called them); and if I had not ſteeled my heart againſt that fooliſh failing, *pity*, I could not have perſiſted in the line of truth.

Vernon, the friend of my youth, reſided at this time at our houſe, having finiſhed the ſtudies neceſſary to a mercantile education; and he now only waited for a vacancy, to go abroad on ſome adventure.

I endeavoured in vain to open the eyes of this bigoted youth, who was

nearly my own age. I put into his hands books of religious controverſy, in hopes of catching his mind by ſome inſoluble queſtion. I demanded of him frequently, an explanation of all the articles of religious belief. I read to him the admirable writings of Voltaire and Hume: but he had the impudence to ſay, they contradicted each other; that Voltaire frequently aſſerted falſehoods as certainties, which three-fourths of his readers had not means to detect; and that Hume was ſo contradictory and unintelligible, that the reader was loſt in a jargon of words.

He had taken a ſtrong fancy to a very elegant girl, the daughter of a farmer in our neighbourhood, and was never happy but when writing verſes in her praiſe, or teaching her, what he called, the Chriſtian virtues. He was ſo jealous of this fancied property, that he

was for excluding all others from their natural right. Had I attended to the old-faſhioned doctrine of *honour*, I might have refrained from deſiring the girl myſelf; but our enjoyments are very tranſient in this world, and none but fools will think of the next.

Your church people, who believe that they have ſouls, might indeed be deterred from violating innocence and plundering the weak: but I rejoice to think theſe notions are growing obſolete; and not being troubled with ſuch qualms myſelf, I reſolved to gratify the pure and natural deſire I had, at leaſt to divide with Vernon the affections of Amelia.

The girl herſelf ſoon perceived the difference; for, having a quick underſtanding, ſhe became enamoured of the new doctrines I daily diſcourſed upon,

for they carried ſelf-evident proofs in the latitude they allowed for the paſſions and weakneſs of human nature.

Vernon was of too jealous a diſpoſition not to perceive her growing coolneſs towards himſelf, and that all his ſanctified religious notions were unattended to. His vigilance was rouſed, and he ſoon diſcovered that I had not only ſupplanted him, but even gained thoſe favours he durſt not in idea think of: a glorious proof of the ſuperiority of truth and the new morality.

In the narrow ſpirit of ſelf-love, and the old times of chivalry, he ſent me a challenge with all the fire of a madman, and all the reproaches he could have uttered had I injured him in the moſt infamous manner.

Determined to preſerve the dignity of

of conſcious innocence, I replied to him in a letter, 'That it was the offſpring of deſpotiſm, to bring any argument to the ſword;—that his appeal to force was palpably wrong, as he ſhould have convinced me, by rational tenets, that I was not right. I alſo begged him to reflect, that my mind, being infinitely more illumined and more liberal than his, I was ſo much more valuable in the ſcale of moral virtue. That his death would, in the eye of political juſtice, be a matter of inſignificance, but that mine would be a great detriment to ſociety in general, for whoſe benefit I even durſt not uſe the ſelf-command of my perſon, by riſking it againſt his*.'

I happened to meet him the ſame evening, on my way to Amelia. His eye kindled the moment he ſaw me; and

* The modern doctrine of Godwin and Co.

ſtanding firmly in my way, he waited my arrival.

'Execrable coward*!' cried he, 'monſter of human depravity! you have for ever ruined the tranquillity of my exiſtence, and you deny me the *honourable* ſatisfaction of a gentleman. Were there not others leſs worthy than Amelia, whom you might have contaminated with your deteſtable maxims? But none other than the beloved darling of the ſoul of your friend, the girl whom he had doted on from infancy, you muſt defame!'

'*Friendſhip!*' ſaid I, when his paſſion allowed him to pauſe; 'we ought never to form *particular* friendſhips with any one, to the excluſion of the whole

* I have been accuſed of pleading for duelling. Let any man who calls himſelf a gentleman judge.

ſpecies:

ſpecies: every man ought to be our friend; but before we enter into confidence, we ought to inquire carefully into the worth of our object, that we may not beſtow upon him a regard which his abilities do not deſerve, or we ſhall act unjuſtly. We ought to be ſure, after a certain allowance for the fallibility of the human judgment*.'

'Periſh ſuch infernal doctrines!' cried he, interrupting me: 'ſuch cold-hearted and diabolical ſyſtems would unhinge all ſociety in the univerſe!'

'True,' cried I, 'true, moſt true,' raiſing my voice, determined to be heard in the cauſe of truth. 'It were well for mankind, if ſociety were this moment aboliſhed: we ſhould then be free from its vices; virtue would ſpread her celeſtial banner over the children of men; ſcience would dart the rays of

* Political Juſtice, page 86.

its fecundating beams to the boſoms of all men; and liberty would ſpread her reign from zone to zone, and from one pole to the other.'

'What is this jargon?' ſaid he, with a look of calm contempt: 'Is the liberty you wiſh, the right of raviſhing your friend's miſtreſs? Is this virtue you blaze forth—the committal of outrage, and ſlinking from the puniſhment? And what is your ſtate of nature, but a ſtate of anarchy and bloodſhed?'

'You miſname every thing,' ſaid I. 'If the great metaphyſician Stupeo were here, he would ſoon convince you. As it is, I would aſk how I have injured you? Is Amelia any way injured but in your romantic fancy? What claim had you to her more than I? Should I at this moment oppoſe you, if you were to ſupplant me, or even divide with me her affections? No; ſo much *philan-*

thropy,

thropy, ſo much *friendſhip* do I feel, that though I was now going to her, you ſhall go in my place.'

'Villain! monſter!' cried he, nearly choaking with paſſion; 'this moment I would tear your ſoul from your body, did not *gratitude* for your father prevent me. Live then! live to be a curſe to yourſelf and ſociety!'

'Do you not know,' ſaid I, 'that *gratitude* is a crime? becauſe——'

'Becauſe, d—n—n!' vociferated he, 'Begone, monſter! The man without gratitude is a companion alone for the blackeſt fiends of hell. The affections of angelic mind are loſt on his callous ſoul. He may talk as he will of benevolence, but *ſelf* is the centre of all his actions; and becauſe he will not *return* a favour, he would meanly ſeek to deſtroy the obligation. — Frederick,

Frederick,' continued he, in a voice ſupernaturally ſolemn, 'remember this. Nothing can be more fallacious than the philanthropic principles held out by modern philoſophers: they paint themſelves as the moſt benevolent of the human race; they lament the horrors of Weſt-Indian ſlavery; they groan at the ſufferings of mankind, which ariſe from the nature of man and mortal exiſtence. But look yourſelf, and let others diſpaſſionately look into the conduct of theſe worthy patriots, and I challenge you, or them, to bring me *one* man in an hundred, who will, or who has beſtowed one ſingle ſhilling *voluntarily*, either to relieve the diſtreſſes of the poor,' or to aid the ſupport of their country. In the one caſe, they ſhuffle off, by ſaying, the poor have a *right to demand* the property of the rich; we are determined not to give a penny to a ſet of cowards, who will not riſe and cut the throats of ariſto-

crats

crats and placemen. In the other caſe, they exclaim, *I* give any thing to ſupport a ſet of miniſterial minions! No, it is contrary to my principles, I will oppoſe them in every meaſure; and if a foreign enemy ſhould come, I will either be neutral, or rejoice to ſee the day that ſhall make us free. What is the meaning of this cant, let your own ſenſe dictate. Were theſe men to come forward and pay the regular taxes, there would not require above half that are now oſtenſibly demanded, the burden would be more equal, and the honeſt part of ſociety would not be cruſhed with more than their portion. This, Frederick, is probably the laſt time I ſhall converſe with you: it is *gratitude* which impels me to deſire your reform; and I would have you look at thoſe men, who have always the word *morality* in their mouth: look at the private life of any one of them, and you will find the liberty they ſeek

to be no other than the right to practiſe every licentiouſneſs, unchecked by the *law*, and unſtigmatiſed by ſober and religious men.'

I was going to repeat ſome of the arguments of the profound metaphyſical Stupeo. I was going to prove, that we ought to doubt whether two and two made four, or the greater was larger than the leſs: but he turned from me with a look of ſuperiority, and I could not for my ſoul but muſe over his ſermon, which was ſacrilege againſt the cauſe of reaſon and truth; it being well known that our political demagogues, our brethren in the cauſe of univerſal man, live in the moſt abſtemious manner, that they may give the ſurplus to the poor. Will they not with true patriotiſm make the meaneſt ſubterfuges to evade a tax, by which means a double burden is thrown upon thoſe who cannot flinch, and mankind

are

are forced to open their eyes? Do they not print cheap books to enlighten their underſtanding, and let them ſee how they are plundered and robbed*? For it is no argument to ſay, that from thoſe who have not, nor ever had any thing, nothing can be taken:—for what is more clear, than that I commit a robbery on a man if I with-hold his juſt demands? and the rich have no more real claim to their wealth, than a farmer has to the product of the ground he has cultivated; and which ought to be divided equally to all the people on the ſurface. No man has a right to monopoliſe the fruits of the earth.

The arguments of Vernon might have weight on ſome minds; and I trembled to think that he was counteracting all

* It is to be lamented that the Government party do not endeavour to counteract this method of propagating French principles, by diſtributing books of religious and moral duty.

the

the good which I hoped to produce in the vicinity. So dangerous an enemy to liberty and reaſon ought to be removed; and when I returned home, I immediately went to my father, deſiring him to withdraw his countenance from Vernon, who was a man that abuſed his generoſity.

'I can hardly believe him capable,' ſaid my father; 'and even if he were ſo, the hopes I have inſpired him with, render it in me a ſacred duty to provide for him. I have educated him ſuperior to his fortune; I have given him, as I may ſay, a mind equal to a great employ; and I ſhould deem it injuſtice to caſt him down, and to deſtroy all the talents he has acquired, and the ſchemes he has indulged, beneath my influence.'

'But,' cried I, 'your influence may be employed to better purpoſe, and it is the

the greater good we ought to prefer. What is the tenderneſs to which you are bound? This expectation you dare not diſappoint. Has his expectation altered the original purpoſe of his life, engaged him in undertakings from which he would otherwiſe have abſtained? Be it ſo: he and all other men would be taught to depend more on their own exertions*: they would be taught never to rely on vain expectations, but act from the noble energies of independence.'

'What language is this?' cried my father. 'What would ſociety become, if no human being could depend on the promiſe or the protection of another? And what is this greateſt good? A term without meaning, a cant phraſe to avoid a duty. The greateſt good is, to be upright and ſincere before God and

* Political Juſtice, vol. i. page 156 to 160.

man;

man; and not, becauſe my preſent convenience may ſuit, to turn the whole life of a dependent into a different channel; break all his connections, and diſſolve his plans at my will. This indeed is deſpotiſm with a power ſuperior to the mandates of Perſian plenipotence.'

'I wiſh,' ſaid I, 'the divine, mythologiſtical, metaphyſical Stupeo were here; he would ſhortly convince you that you are in a palpable error.'

'He could never,' replied my father, 'ſophiſticate the common-ſenſe dictates of a mind wiſhing to do right.'

We were interrupted by the entrance of Vernon, who pauſed, and trembled at ſeeing me. I did not wiſh wholly to confound and embarraſs him with my preſence, and therefore withdrew.

I know

I know not what paſſed between him and my father; but the next morning he departed by break of day, and my father ſhut himſelf up in his cloſet, in a gloomy fit.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREATEST GOOD FULLY ILLUSTRATED BY A STRANGE ACCIDENT —ANECDOTES OF PATRIOTISM.

I Continued my connection with Amelia, and had the satisfaction to perceive that another human being would be added to the race of men. My father, by some means, became acquainted with the circumstance; and I was catechised for having followed the dictates of nature. Family pride did not permit his requesting me to marry her, though he pretended that his only objection

objection was, that no union could be happy after ſo great a lapſe of diſcretion. He propoſed that I ſhould, for ſome time, quit the country; and he would provide for Amelia and the child, when it ſhould be born.

'Let the pariſh provide for it,' ſaid I; 'all children ought to belong to the public. The great, the immortal, the virtuous, and illuſtrious Rouſſeau ſent his children to be maintained by the Foundling Hoſpital at Paris*: and ſhall I be aſhamed of copying ſo great a maſter, whoſe actions were all ſublime?'

'And how do you reconcile thoſe principles with morality?' ſaid my father.

'Morality,' I replied, 'is political juſtice, which prefers the good of the

* Rouſſeau's Confeſſions.

whole

whole to the good of a part; ſuffering partial evil, that the great work of truth may go forward, and liberty and reaſon be paramount over ſelfiſhneſs, pride, ſuperſtition, and prieſtcraft.'

'Excellent!' cried my father, breaking into a loud laugh: 'a ſpeech worthy the humble copier of Rouſſeau, and the great metaphyſician Stupeo. Let me aſk you one queſtion, Frederic—Do you underſtand yourſelf?'

'Do I underſtand myſelf? Yes; and what I ſay is as legible as the broad beams of the ſun at noon day: it is written in the great book of Nature.'

It was evening when this converſation took place: and we were ſtartled by a ſudden blaze of light, which darted acroſs the hemiſphere; at the ſame moment the ſervants cried out, Fire! and we could perceive the farm in a blaze.

My

My father and I, together with the ſervants, haſtened to the ſpot, where we found a ſcene of deplorable diſtreſs. The farmer had forgot his children in his endeavours to ſave his property, which he threw out at the window.

His wife had fainted away; and the younger children were ſcreaming in an upper ſtory. My father, without any reflection, darted up the flaming ſtairs, and deſcended with the two little boys in his arms; in doing which, he was conſiderably ſcorched. Meanwhile, I ſnatched a ladder from one of the men, with intention to reſcue Amelia, who had been ſleeping in her room, and now appeared terrified at the window. I was going to apply the ladder, when part of the roof fell into the room where her father was employed, and drove him to the window in danger of ſuffocation.

In

In this dilemma it was impoſſible to ſave both:—'Were Stupeo here,' cried I, 'he would tell which is the moſt deſerving of life; but I ſhall commit ſome injuſtice, if I ſave the life of the one with the leſſer merit.' ('Let go the ladder,' cried ſeveral; 'why do you keep it uſeleſs?') I, at that moment, remembered a parallel caſe, quoted by the excellent philoſopher, Stupeo, in ſupport of the new political juſtice.—'Suppoſe,' ſaid he, 'the Archbiſhop of Cambray and his maid are both in danger of periſhing in flames, which ought I to ſave? The maid, a ſtupid creature, little better than a brute;—the Archbiſhop, a man of eminent virtue and learning, and the author of Telemachus*. To ſave the one, at the hazard of my own life, is ſcarce more virtue than to ſave a dog; but to ſave the Archbiſhop, is an act of the higheſt

* Godwin's Political Juſtice, page 84.

virtue;

virtue; becauſe all actions are to be eſteemed in exact proportion to the merit of the perſon receiving benefit. Now the difficulty is, in the preſent caſe, to know whether the farmer or his daughter is of moſt value to mankind. The farmer cultivates the earth, and provides for his family in a groſs kind of way: the daughter is young, and may add many to the human ſpecies: but then——'

I was calmly proceeding, in ſpite of the ſtruggles of the men to wreſt the ladder from me, when a tremendous craſh and a large column of flame ended my diſcuſſion, and I had the horror to ſee the farmer and his daughter both overwhelmed in the burning ruins. I was ſhocked at ſo dreadful an accident, which would not have happened had Stupeo been there: but in this preſent raſcally ſyſtem of government and ſociety, virtue will not always ſucceed;

ſucceed; and no man can be condemned, if evil ſhould reſult from a good intention.

It was, however, a very deplorable circumſtance, and I regretted deeply that I was not better verſed in the great book of Nature and Man, as I ſhould then have known inſtantly how to appreciate the ſeveral degrees of merit.

Another unpleaſant circumſtance reſulted. The common people, who are like a ſwiniſh multitude, and cannot perceive reaſon, (how indeed ſhould they, when they are held in profound ignorance?) inſiſted upon it, that I had retained the ladder purpoſely to ſuffer them to periſh; by which I expected to avoid the conſequences of my connection with Amelia. My father himſelf was inclined to believe the report; and unleſs I had the logic of Stupeo, and the effrontery of Voltaire, (who being aſked

aſked how he could inſert falſehoods ſo glaring in his hiſtory, replied, 'To one half of the preſent generation they will be facts, and the next will not poſſeſs the means of detection.') I ſhould have found it impoſſible to prevent their reproaches.

A committee of ſtupid farmers met to inquire into the cauſe of the fire. It began in a back ſtable, where I had been on ſome buſineſs in the courſe of the day: their ſuſpicions appeared facts, and a warrant was ſent for to apprehend me.

I was very much aſtoniſhed when my father mentioned this with tears in his eyes, and told me the corroborating circumſtances were in every point againſt me; that my retention of the ladder was too evidently to prevent the reſcue of two wretched perſons whom I had in fact murdered; that he ſhud-

dered at being father to ſo profligate a ſon; but that his conſideration for my mother prevented his aſſiſting to detain me himſelf, as I ſhould moſt aſſuredly be hanged, unleſs I poſſeſſed incontrovertible proofs in my favour.

'I maintain it,' cried I, 'that in a ſtate of nature the fire could not have happened: I even doubt that it has now happened. Did you ever read the great, the faſhionable Hume, in his Treatiſe on Human Nature? In all incidents of life, we ought ſtill to preſerve our ſcepticiſm. If we *believe* that fire warms, or water refreſhes, 'tis only becauſe it coſts us too much pains to think otherwiſe: nay, *if we are* philoſophers, it ought only to be on ſceptical principles*.'

'You will believe,' ſaid he, 'when

* Vol. i. page 469.

the

the rope is tightened round your neck.'

'I know not whether there be reality in that,' ſaid I, 'it may be only an idea: we cannot be certain that any man was ever hanged; becauſe, if we proceed upon hear-ſay evidence, upon tradition, ever-varying; upon chronicles and annals, which are half interpolations; I ſay, if we believe all thoſe ſort of teſtimonies, we may as well believe the authenticity of our bibles; for, in fact, we have as little real proof of the burning of the farm-houſe, the hanging of John the painter, the revolution of Maſſanielo, and the exiſtence of Alexander, as we have of a book, which is merely the laws and hiſtory of people, preſerved in their ſynagogues by *themſelves:* our ſenſes are the moſt deceiving things in nature.'

'You ſpeak lightly,' ſaid my father with a deep ſigh: 'had you the common feelings of a man, the loſs of Amelia would rend your heart; but you are callous to the ties of nature: if, however, you cannot prove your innocence, you would do well to fly; and this purſe will ſupply you the means.'

'Give me a few moments,' ſaid I, 'to deliberate. I would march rejoicing, with a firm ſtep and ſteady countenance, to meet the axe of the executioner, if it would promote the cauſe of truth: but I have yet to conſider how my death will benefit mankind, whether it will impreſs a conviction of the omnipotent power of truth, or whether——'

'Are you indeed mad?' ſaid my father, gazing at me ſorrowfully.

'Mad!' cried I. 'No; I repeat the ſentiments

ſentiments of all enlightened men; I have the power to eſcape, and the power to march to the gibbet, and I only balance between the reſulting good of either action.'

'You are not fit to be a member of civil ſociety.'

'I know it; I glory in the idea: were I fit to live in ſociety, I ſhould be no real and genuine philoſopher. Society is a fungus, reared in the hot-bed of luxury.'

'Fly!' cried he: 'the mob is coming acroſs the green—it is dark, haſte through the garden!'

I really did not ſee that any good would reſult from my being hanged; for how could I know what yet remained for me to perform on the great ſtage

of life? and accordingly I haſtened from the houſe.

I continued to croſs the country, chagrined at the effect of conſideration. I muſt confeſs, the new philoſophy involves one in ſituations that require all the energies of the human mind; and indeed it would be almoſt impracticable, were it not for that fundamental and happy maxim of diſbelieving every thing paſt, preſent, and to come.

I deteſted diſguiſe, becauſe it is inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of truth; and I know not but all ſorts of ſtratagem are blots on the dignity of virtue. It was, however, very awkward, that a philoſopher ſhould be hanged for ſuch a trifle as the death of a farmer and his daughter.

I pro-

I proceeded forward the whole of that night, and the next day I remained to reſt at a farm-houſe, again ſetting out at the commencement of evening. I had not advanced above ſeven miles, when I heard a conſiderable noiſe in a barn, like a tumult of applauſe, which again ſubſided into a calm; and I could hear a voice pronouncing a declamatory ſpeech. I haſtened to the door, which was guarded by ſome ill-looking fellows, and, having paid ſixpence, was uſhered into a crowd of gaping farmers and cottagers. A little dark-complexioned man, with a moſt hypocritical countenance, and a grin of ſelf-applauſe mingled with contempt, was inſtructing the clowns in their rights. His voice was elevated to the pitch of raving, and the idea of liberty gave volubility to his tongue, which he rolled about with the energy of enthuſiaſm.

'Citizens,' cried he, 'citizens and fellow brethren of the human race, this is a glorious ſight; this is a diſplay that ſhall ſtrike terror into tyrants. The priſoners rattle their chains, and will ſoon daſh them in pieces on the heads of their jailors.—Germs of my love! how it gives ſatisfaction to my ſoul, to ſee you aſſembled and determined in the good cauſe! What ſhall we do? Shall we pray, like a ſet of canting methodiſts? No, we will do ſomething better. (Here he made ſigns of fighting.) Yes, citizens, we will rally round our rights; we will claim ſomething elſe beſides mouldy parchments and rotten charters; we will demand the Rights of Man! (Can any citizen furniſh me with a morſel of fruit, for I am exceeding thirſty?) Well, brethren, let us reflect upon the horrid times we live in; I don't mean to ſay this country, and I don't care how many Government ſpies there may be

be amongſt us; I am ſpeaking as if I was in Rome. Let us remember the times of our forefathers:—hear it, citizens! In the time of good Queen Beſs, every ploughman could, with his day's wages, carry home a ſucking pig, or a turkey, to his family at night*: which of you can do ſo? Won't you believe now that the times are bad? that you are ſlaves? that Old England (mind I mean Old Rome) is ruined, and that, without ſome energetic exertion, we ſhall never redeem ourſelves from perdition?—Brethren! germs of my love! this is a meeting for the cauſe of univerſal man: no real citizen would refuſe to give—— What! ſlinking away through the gate when we talk of giving? Aye, aye, the miniſter has drained your pockets, not left you a farthing:—

* This very aſſertion, amongſt many others, was made to a *London* audience by a London Political Lecturer.

however, the box is held at the gate*. Well, citizens, I am the man that ſtands forward to defend your rights — and what do you think the Government will do with me? I'll tell you: they will put me in a dungeon, where I ſhall look through the grating at you; or they'll hang me on a gibbet, where I ſhall dingle dangle before you like a ſcare-crow. But let them—I am willing to ſuffer for your ſake†.'

Here he deſcended from the roſtrum, amidſt the loud applauſes of the multitude; and I preſſed eagerly forward to get a ſight of a man labouring in the cauſe of philoſophy and truth.

'Citizen,' ſaid I, ſeizing his hand, 'were the great, the metaphyſical, the

* Meeting at Chalk Farm.

† Meeting at Copenhagen Houſe.

oratorical

oratorical Stupeo here, he would honour you for your noble ſpeech.'

'Which of my ſpeeches?' ſaid he. 'You may get the laſt philippic of the doorkeeper for a ſhilling.'

'My dear friend,' ſaid I, 'I am a diſciple of the wonderful Stupeo, whom you muſt have heard of. Tell me how I may be of ſervice in the cauſe of human nature.'

'Have you ſubſcribed?' demanded he: 'Are you a member?'

'I am a ſtranger, but I pretend to ſome little philoſophy.' He gazed upon me; and ſome friend ſtepping up, I was parted from him by the crowd.

He is too much a philoſopher, thought I, to have his reflections interrupted by idle curioſity: he will now retire to

meditate on the ſubject of his undertaking, and I will endeavour to ſee him in the morning.

I proceeded towards the next village acroſs ſome fields, and, as I went ſlowly, was overtaken by two countrymen, who were in high argument.—'I tell thee,' ſaid one, 'it be's a thing impoſſible as a labouring body ſhould yearn a pig in yan day. Why, doan't I know as how, thof we pays dearer for an article in name, we do have more money in *propoſition*, as our Parſon ſay.'

'He ſay!' cried the other: 'he's a right to ſtand up for himſelf, and make folks believe any thing. Why, I tell thee now, atween mon and mon, that Ould England be gone to the dogs, as we heard Citizon Ego ſay; and it will never be as it ought to be, till we have another Aldermon Cromwell, and no tithes.'

'Alderman

'Alderman Cromwell!' repeated the firſt. 'Why, thee be's an arrant ninny-hammer: he were Oliver Cromwell, an our Parſon did tell us about him laſt Sunday, as how he did tax the people, when he got fixed, as much or more than they were before.'

'I will be ſtringed up,' cried the other, 'if it were not Aldermon Cromwell now. Why, I did hear a deel about un from a paper Citizon Ego did give away for nothing.'

'Like a montabank to catch fools,' ſaid the other. 'You'd a deel better go and mind your maſter's buſineſs, and not trouble your thick head about nation affairs.'

My blood began to riſe in the cauſe of truth.—'What,' cried I, 'would you have the human ſoul bound down and fettered in bonds of ſuperſtition and

and ignorance? Give the intellectual faculties play, and then the great day of univerſal emancipation will ſoon arrive.'

'Menſuration!' cried the firſt: 'who be you, to talk of menſuration? Ayn't the country divided enough, without more menſuration?'

'My good friend,' ſaid I, 'learn that emancipation is the freeing of all mankind from their chains; when neither prieſts, nor kings, nor Oliver Cromwells will be wanted.'

'Thee lies,' cried one in anger: 'Alderman Cromwell were the only good man in the land, and I wiſh we had an hundred at this preſent.'

'Who are you,' ſaid the other, 'that abuſe your betters? You ſhall go to the ſtocks if you talk treaſon.'

'The

'The ſtocks!' cried I: 'you would do well both of you to go there, and learn your alphabet; then you would know a little more.'

The champion of Alderman Cromwell was too much irritated at this reply to enter deeper into the argument; and being alſo in a quarrelling diſpoſition from the ſpeeches of his adverſary, he inſtantly ſtruck me over the head a blow which nearly brought me to the ground. I returned it in an inſtant with a good cudgel, and he fell at his length before me. His antagoniſt attempted to collar me; but, darting my fiſt in his mouth, he ſtuck up to me in a more ſcientific way; and though I beat him black and blue in about ſix rounds, I was myſelf ſo bruiſed, that I crawled with difficulty to the next inn.

Having procured ſome vinegar, or rather ſour beer, I retired to the chamber

ber allotted me, which was on the upper ſtory, the roof admitting the ſparkling of the ſtars as they paſſed over. I lay down on a dirty piece of a bed, which the maid told me was all they had to ſpare, the reſt of the houſe being engaged by the London gentlemen.

I was grieved at ſo fair an opportunity being loſt; but my bruiſes paining me, I found little inclination to enter into political diſcuſſion.

I endeavoured to ſleep, but a loud noiſe in the room beneath effectually prevented me. I aroſe after ſome time, and through a chink in the floor could perceive the ſame little dark Citizen Ego, and two others, the one in green-and-buff, and the other in black.

'We ſhall make a decent harveſt, citizens,' ſaid Ego; 'the germ of freedom

dom begins to ſhoot, and we ſhall reap the benefit.'

'How much,' ſaid Green-and-buff, 'ſhall we divide to-night? This is but a poor place. I am about a work that ſhall bring more money, and ſet the nation more together by the ears than all your lectures and debates. I ſhall demonſtrate by a ratio, clear as the angles of a triangle, that the whole kingdom is beggared; and every man will buy the book to ſee how: it will be torn from the preſs; the very Government will buy it up. I ſhall prove to every man, if he has any common ſenſe, that all the property in his warehouſe won't fetch him half-a-crown in the pound.'

'Drink about, my boys,' ſaid the man in black. 'If we had but three nice pretty little *rogues* here, I would recite my ode to the beſt of kings—'tis a d—d clever thing, citizens; Pepper's book

book will be nothing to mine: I make out every man to be a raſcal or a fool; there's nothing like it: the more you abuſe people, the more eager they are to buy. I've found out the ſecret, and I take care to lay it on thick enough; true or falſe, 'tis no matter to me, not a pin.—There was the other night I was at the Opera, and there was my Lady ———. Oho! here comes the ſupper.'

The papers before them were rolled into their pockets. Roaſt fowls, and other articles of equal luxury, attracted their attention; and jeſts at the folly of mankind filled the intervals. 'Damn it,' ſaid Ego, 'do you know I had a deviliſh difficulty to get on to-night! I thought I was a little too far out; but I thundered it away, and they gulped it all down for goſpel. If I mention a Government ſpy, I always ſet the room in a roar.'

Having

Having eat till they could eat no more, they were again left to themſelves over a bowl of punch.—'Here's,' cried Ego, graſping the bowl and lifting it to his mouth, 'Here's the dignity of human nature, and may the blood of ruthleſs tyrants flow like this punch!'

'Bravo! citizen,' roared out the man in black; 'down your throat you mean. Well, but now we muſt to buſineſs.'

'We have letters to write,' ſaid Ego, 'from Edinburgh, from Liverpool, and from Portſmouth. Our club in London is grown ſo fearful, that we ſhall not keep them together without ſome flaming correſpondence from ſome of the large towns. Which will you take, Pepper? will you write from Liverpool? Talk a great deal about virtuous poverty, the dignity of human nature, and a thirſt of knowledge; tell them of the converts

verts my ſpeeches daily procure: and you, citizen, you write from Edinburgh; talk about the Scotch tree of liberty*: for myſelf, do you know I'm aſſaſſinated!'

'Ha! ha! ha! how, pray?'

'Why, the enemies of Liberty, the hirelings of Government have ſtabbed me at Portſmouth. D—n it, citizens, it will be a blow up, better than a mine in a counterſcarp: when I get back to London, I may ſhew myſelf for a wild beaſt.'

'But it won't do,' cried Pepper; 'John Bull won't be gulled ſo. D—n it, keep the broad way; tell him that there is a mine of dormant good ſenſe

* The conductors of the Correſponding Society will perfectly remember the *genuine* letters read to the ſociety from places where no clubs exiſted. But there are ſecrets in all trades.

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in him, which, if not brought into action, will die with him*. Talk about revolutions, taxes, ropes, and axes, till you ſet his brains a-whirling, and then you may pick his pocket with all the eaſe in nature.'

'Right, right, right!' ſhouted Ego. 'But what are all theſe trifles? When our clubs are properly eſtabliſhed we ſhall govern the nation, we ſhall ride upon the heads of the people, ſuperior to law or human controul†.'

I was

* Rights of Man.

† No man who has the ſmalleſt affection for genuine liberty would for a moment wiſh the eſtabliſhment of affiliated clubs, under whatever pretence. The Jacobine club has deluged France with blood. But not to mention what every one knows, and to ſuppoſe that their *oſtenſible* motives were good, ſtill they have no right to dictate to the nation at large: and it is well known that a few daring and needy men may by this coalition domineer over a whole people. The words of the Emperor

I was ſo agitated with this dialogue between the pretended friends of liberty, that I ſtarted up, and cried aloud, 'Hypocrites! will you ſully the beauty of truth by ſuch actions? Will you bring her into diſgrace with mankind?'

'Blood and murder!' roared out Citizen Ego, 'where are my piſtols? Citizens, we are betrayed! Let us fly! The ſpies of Government are come upon us, thick as the locuſts of Egypt.'

peror Trajan to Pliny may here be applied. When the latter requeſted permiſſion to inſtitute a company of firemen, the former conſented with theſe words: "But it is to be remembered, that this ſort of ſocieties have greatly diſturbed the peace of that province in general, and of thoſe cities in particular. *Whatever name* we give them, and for *whatever purpoſes* they may be founded, they will not fail to form themſelves into aſſemblies, however ſhort their meetings may be." So political clubs, for whatever purpoſe inſtituted, will not fail in the end to produce anarchy, and take the reins of government into their own hands.

'A deſpo-

'A deſpotiſm,' cried Pepper, 'is the worſt of all governments; no man is ſafe in his own houſe: formerly, an Engliſhman's houſe was his caſtle; but ſince we have opened the eyes of mankind, we are daily more and more reſtrained.'

'Sit down, citizens,' ſaid the man in black. 'Drink away, and laugh at the devil: it was only a falſe alarm.'

'I won't ſtay another hour in the houſe,' cried Pepper; 'I will be off through this window.'

'Who is to pay the reckoning?' ſaid Ego.

'Pugh! What's the reckoning to us?' ſaid Pepper. 'We will tell the world that we were purſued by the blood-hounds of Government, and ſomebody elſe will pay the ſcore. We have been here

here more than a week, and the bill will be ſome pounds.' So ſaying, he gently opened the window. I ſtamped aloud with my foot upon the floor; they were again alarmed; and, not waiting to look behind them, all three deſcended into the lane.

I raved about the room, lamenting the depravity of mankind, and almoſt afraid that ſome of the principles of the new philoſophy were erroneous: but I remembered that truth could not be injured by the abuſes of ſome of its profeſſors, except they were hypocritical prieſts, there being a wide difference between religion and politics.

In the morning I found myſelf too ſtiff to remove with pleaſure. The whole inn was in an uproar about the fugitives; and the landlord conſigned all polititians pell mell to the devil. To refreſh my ſpirits, I walked down into

the garden, where I had not ſtayed long before I was alarmed by the cries of a lad, and, haſtening to inquire the accident, found it the ſon of the innkeeper, who was ſuffering a ſevere flagellation with an horſe-whip; his father ſeemed to lay on in vexation for his late loſs.

'What,' cried I, ſeizing him by the arm, 'what are you doing? What has the poor lad done?'

'What I'll murder him for if he repeats,' anſwered the angry innkeeper: 'he has been robbing an orchard, and will bring himſelf to the gallows.'

'But you ſhould adviſe him—you ſhould convince him of his error by reaſon and argument, and not uſe coercion.'

'I don't know what you mean by

coercion?' ſaid he: but I have already ſufficiently talked to him, and now his hide ſhall ſuffer.'

'You are wrong; all coercion is wrong,' cried I: 'at this moment your ſon feels a ſenſe of inſult and injury; he feels himſelf right, and that you are a tyrant*.'

'Who are you?' demanded the innkeeper. 'D—n me if I don't think you are a partner with thoſe that bilked the reckoning, and go about the country teaching children diſobedience, and the poor people to knock the rich on the head for feeding them.'

'Softly,' ſaid I: 'if you had ever heard the mythological Stupeo, you would have thought differently. The rich plunder you, tax you, and drive you.'

* Political Juſtice.

'That's

'That's as bouncing a lie as ever was uttered,' ſaid he bluntly: 'we don't plunder them to be ſure, becauſe its all in the way of buſineſs, but we tax them pretty ſoundly, and my oſtler drives them.'

'You don't comprehend,' ſaid I: 'I ſpeak of political evils.'

'What have I to do with politics?' ſaid he. Let every man mind his own buſineſs, and I'll be bound for it the nation will run very well. Why now, there's a canting ſet of mealy-mouthed vagabonds, preaching up rebellion and ſetting people by the ears, and what good comes on it? Why, the miniſter, to keep his ſeat, pulls the reins the tighter, and the ſteady horſe is pinched for the reſtiveneſs of his companion.'

'But,' ſaid I, 'theſe are only partial evils: we ought to conſider the good

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of the whole, and the benefit mankind will receive.'

'Benefit! what, to talk politics when their families are ſtarving, and about the Rights of Man when they are drinking their children's maintenance, and about clothing the negroes of Africa, when their own family is in rags. I tell ye, maſter, I've ſeen enough of theſe here rotten politics in my ale-room.'

I found his conceptions ſo groſs and ſtupid, that I determined to remain no longer under his roof; and, though I could ſcarcely walk, I took a place in a ſtage-coach for London.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

THE VAGABOND MEETS WITH VARIOUS ADVENTURES — A DUEL IN THE REPUBLICAN STYLE.

IN the ſtage were two female paſſengers, a young man well dreſſed, and two perſons with the appearance of ſubſtantial tradeſmen.

'Well, Mr. Adams,' ſaid one of the tradeſmen, as ſoon as the ſtage had cleared the town, 'Is there any news from London? Have the rioters in St. George's Fields diſperſed yet?'

'Diſperſed! No,' cried Adams, 'nor I hope ever will, till they have cut up popery root and branch, and eſtabliſhed liberty.'

'So you would eſtabliſh liberty by religious perſecution? That would be like the Americans fighting for freedom with one hand, and rattleing the whip over their ſlaves with the other.'

'You and I never agree, Maſter Ketchup; you have read ſo little, that you are quite ignorant of all the wheels within wheels that ſet the great crane of government in motion.'

'I never heard that government was like a crane,' ſaid the young gentleman; 'Pray, how may that be?'

'Why, it lifts heavy brains into the cockloft of honour,' retorted Adams, with a loud laugh. 'You thought, I ſuppoſe,

ſuppoſe, you had caught a green one: it is not for ignorant people to talk politics.'

'You are right, my friend,' replied the young gentleman; 'and I can give you another ſimile:—government is like a crane, becauſe it lifts all the raſcals it catches out of this world.'

'Gentlemen,' ſaid I, 'this is idle punning, and beneath the diſcuſſion of men who think on the glorious dawn of liberty that is breaking from the ſhores of America.

'And blazing in the deſtruction of houſes in London,' ſaid Ketchup. 'I have, however, little doubt yet, but we ſhall be able to reduce the Americans to obedience.'

'Never,' cried Adams, 'never: the French will pour in troops upon Canada

from the Baltic; and I had it as a private fact, that they were at this moment marching from the Spaniſh ſettlements in South America, and intended to take our Hudſon's Bay factory in their route, and to ruin our Newfoundland fiſhery*. Then, what ſhall we do for whalebone and lamp oil? The ſtreets of Lon-

* A poſtmaſter's ſon at Louvain, of the name of Wolfe, whoſe intellects were deranged, had for many years imagined himſelf to be a prince. As his madneſs was harmleſs, his friends did not confine him, and he uſed to ſign his name the Prince de Wolfe, and to wear ſtars and ribbons of different orders. This Prince wrote a letter to the *Aſſembly*, teſtifying his admiration of the wiſdom and philoſophy of their decrees, and promiſing to imitate ſo great and good an example in his own territories.—The letter was received, and read with enthuſiaſm in the Aſſembly, and the preſident was ordered to write an anſwer to the Prince de Wolfe.

One would be apt to think the ignorance of the twelfth century was returned, when the geography of Brabant was unknown in France.

PLAYFAIR's Hiſtory of Jacobiniſm, page 346.

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don will be involved in darkneſs, and I ſhall never go to club without loaded piſtols.'

'Be not alarmed,' ſaid the young gentleman, laughing at the geographical error, which was a mere trifle; 'they never will do it. There is news arrived within the laſt twenty-four hours, that the whole expedition has been wrecked upon the flats, off the coaſt of Hanover.

'Indeed,' cried Adams, 'I lament it from my ſoul; but I hope yet that liberty will proſper. If they would take my way, they would run no danger of theſe horrid tempeſts. But people in office are always too proud to take advice from thoſe who are in low ſituations, or they might liſten and learn.'

'Well,' ſaid the youth, 'let us hear your advice, if it be no great ſecret.'

'Why, now, this is it, and can any thing be clearer?—Is not France a continent? and is not America a continent? and is not a continent, as Johnſon's Dictionary ſays, land not disjoined by the ſea from other lands? What then ſhould prevent them marching over land to the relief of the Americans? We hear every day of journies by land to the Eaſt-Indies, and America is not half ſo far.

'Did you ever look at the map of the world?' ſaid the youth: 'you would then ſee a trifling objection.'

'I'll bet you a bottle,' cried Adams, 'it is ſo in Johnſon's Dictionary, and that's the beſt book of the ſort.'

I ſat

I ſat in ſome little pain for the well-meaning Adams, who ſeemed to have a clear ſenſe of truth and reaſon; and what after all does it ſignify to know the relative ſituation of countries, it only conduces to extended oppreſſion. Had Alexander known of China, he would not have lamented the want of other worlds to deſtroy.

'Mr. Adams,' ſaid I, 'you ſeem a man of a true mind, and ſo far as you wiſh the Americans ſucceſs in the cauſe of univerſal man, I honour you; and were the profound politician Stupeo here, he would preſs you to his boſom as a brother of the human race. But, my dear friend, when ſhall we ſee an end of this deteſtable butchery of our ſpecies? When ſhall we ceaſe to worry and devour each other?'

'In a republic,' ſaid Adams, 'no man has an inclination to quarrel—war

always originates from kings. If there were no kings, there would be no wars.'

'I am tired of this eternal babble,' ſaid the young gentleman. 'I abhor war from my ſoul as much as any man; but is it poſſible mankind can be dupes to ſo glaring a lie? What were the republics of Greece and Rome, but a company of banditti, who over-ran all the countries which could not oppoſe them? Theſe very Romans pretended to emancipate the people they went to conquer; yet, when they had reduced them to the ſtate of dependent provinces, ſo heavy were the taxes they impoſed, that Rollin informs us in the tenth volume of his hiſtory, page 136, that the people of Aſia frequently ſold their children of both ſexes to pay theſe republicans for procuring them freedom. What were the ſo much boaſted Spartans? who were too imperious to till

till the ground, and had all things in *equality*. Were they not worſe than the moſt cruel deſpot that ever breathed, to a whole people, whom they compelled to every ſervile employ? What were the refined Athenians, but a company of boxers and prize-fighters, on a par with our porters and draymen? But let us look coolly into the ſubject, and we ſhall find, whatever be the oſtenſible reaſon, all ſorts of governments, and all the tribes of the earth have ever engaged in war.

'You are right,' returned I. 'Mankind has hitherto been in a ſtate of childhood, but the new philoſophy will teach them to go without leading-ſtrings. Stupeo has demonſtrated, that when men are ſufficiently enlightened, their chains will drop off as by magic; every man will hail his fellow as his brother, and the copper-coloured Indian will claſp in his arms the white European,

European. Can any heart not beat with rapture at the idea? Can any mind reſiſt the torrent of omnipotent truth?'

'Your ideas are very ſtrange, I muſt confeſs,' ſaid he, 'but they are morally impracticable. If you deſtroy the arts, and return to pure nature, how will you teach men the new philoſophy? How will you prevent them ſinking into barbarous ignorance?'

'That is not my buſineſs,' ſaid I, 'it is the greateſt good we are to prefer, and not to be ſtaggered by apparent and trifling evils.'

'You are as far wrong, my dear Sir,' ſaid he, 'in true maxims of political juriſprudence, as this learned gentleman is in his knowledge of geography. One thing let me however obſerve, and I have done. When we ſee the infinitude of principles and ideas on ſubjects of religion.

ligion and politics, ought we not to be careful how we deſtroy all the eſtabliſhments which time has ſanctified?'

'Truth,' cried I, 'cannot admit of error: alter it, and transform it as you will, it is ſtill in its eſſence the ſame; and the divine Stupeo——'

'Was for aught I ſee,' interrupted he peeviſhly, 'I an arrant fool.'

I ſaw it was in vain to attempt reclaiming bigotry and prejudice ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, and I attached myſelf to Adams, who ſeemed to have made ſome progreſs in real knowledge.

After dinner, we were proceeding over a fine cultivated track of country, and paſſed by ſeveral weather-beaten and aged countrymen, who were mending an hedge.

'See,'

'See,' cried Adams, 'the effects of ariſtocracy and luxury. It is from thence all the miſeries of the poor ariſe. Why is one man to wallow in wealth, while another is labouring in an hedge for a ſcanty exiſtence? No man can give a reaſon for this.'

'Would reaſons convince you,' ſaid the young man, 'I would endeavour to give you them, for I am grieved to ſee any entertain ſuch ſtrange doctrines.—Luxury is a vulgar phraſe for every thing poſſeſſed by another of which we could make uſe; but in reality it is like the manure to the ground, which cauſes every thing to bring forth double increaſe; it gives invention to the ingenious, it foſters arts and ſciences, it employs the mechanic, the ſhopkeeper, and the merchant; without luxury, none of theſe could meet employ.''

'But the lands would feed all who dwelt

dwelt upon them; mechanics would not waſte their health in the noxious fumes of various proceſſes, and the poor would have leſs to do.'

'It is true, the ground would feed all who cultivated it: but if we infer from facts, we ſhall univerſally find agriculture keeping pace with what we call luxury. You will find, that though on calculating upon paper, this country of England, if cultivated like a garden, would feed thrice the number of inhabitants it contains; yet, unfortunately for political romances, the people would inevitably diminiſh, and a poor half-ſtarved ſyſtem of huſbandry infallibly enſue. It is by calling forth variety of inventions, giving employment to all kinds of genius, that every thing is urged to perfection, and the multiplication of mankind forwarded.'

'But virtue and talents,' ſaid I, 'do not

not meet their rewards, while vice rides triumphant: you ſurely cannot ſay that is politically right? Why ſhould a man be deſpiſed becauſe in a mean garb? And why are riches alone honoured?'

'For this reaſon:—riches are only the means of gratifying our deſires, and increaſing our conveniences. A wiſe man, and a man of genius will endeavour to do ſo by laudable means. In the preſent conſtitution of ſociety, it is in the power of every man poſſeſſing real abilities to riſe to a ſtation equal to thoſe abilities; and therefore we reverence the exteriors of wealth, tacitly beſtowing it upon all the poſſeſſors, becauſe indiſcriminate intercourſe will not admit of time to diſtinguiſh the truly worthy. It is rare, very rare, to find a man of genius in a wretched ſituation, without having brought himſelf ſo by imprudence; but it is by no means rare to find thoſe, whoſe ſelf-love has taught them

them a wrong value to their abilities, and who, therefore, repine at the ſucceſs of others, and their own failure, as the greateſt injuſtice; and originating in a depraved government, and a profligate generation.'

I was extremely chagrined that the ſophiſms of this youth ſhould paſs unrefuted, for his arguments and volubility had ſo confuſed my ſenſes, that I did not recollect any retort, and nothing can be more ſhocking than to loſe the laſt reply in an argument.

The fineneſs of the road invited the coachman to drive forward with celerity. 'The poor beaſts,' ſaid the gentleman, 'feel for our riding at our eaſe. I am aſtoniſhed any of our modern nervous philoſophers make uſe of carriages.'

'Why,' cried Adams, 'what are the beaſts to us? They want human underſtanding

ſtanding to free themſelves. Let us firſt emancipate man, and then we ſhall not need the aid of animals.'

At that moment the coach overſet in a waggon rut; and ſeveral countrymen came from their labour, in a neighbouring field, to aſſiſt to right it. Fortunately none were hurt; but Adams ſnatching up a whip, made at the coachman, curſing him for a careleſs ſcoundrel. 'Who the devil are you,' cried the coachman, 'that give yourſelf ſuch airs?'—'And who are you,' cried Adams, 'a louſy, ſtupid, drunken coachman, with not half the ſenſe of your beaſts. I'll enter an action againſt you, Sirrah. What am I! a gentleman, a citizen, and houſekeeper, to run the danger of having my neck broken by you!'

'Peace, friend,' ſaid the youth, 'you have forgot that you are uſurping all the airs

airs of imperious ariſtocracy: come, and help to right the carriage.'

'I help to right the coach! dirty my clothes! and work like a porter! Sir, you miſtake me.'

'I do, indeed,' ſaid the youth. 'But what right have you to be exempted more than your fellow men? If there was a revolution to-morrow, your lot would be a ploughman.' So ſaying, he turned indignantly away, and helped the peaſants to replace the coach, I being engaged in comforting the women, who were very much frightened.

It was diſcovered that one of the wheels were broken, and the next inn at the diſtance of ſome miles. The countrymen finding they could render us no more ſervice, begged ſomething to drink.—'Come,' ſaid the youth to Adams, 'you would not work yourſelf, let

let us ſee your generoſity in rewarding the labour of others.'

'For what?' ſaid Adams. 'It is the duty of every man to help his fellow men; in fact, thoſe in diſtreſs have a right to demand it. To reward a man for doing his duty is unjuſt, becauſe it is a bribe to do what ought to be done: beſide, the money may be wanted to ſome act of charity, and the greateſt good is always to be preferred.'

'You are right,' ſaid I, 'in theory, but the preſent ſtate of things frequently infringe upon political juſtice: for inſtance, I employ a workman to make me a ſet of chairs, for which I appropriate ten pounds; this man is rich, and another who is poor, comes and tells me his caſe; political juſtice commands me to give the ten pounds to the poor man, and let the other go without.'

'I profeſs,'

'I profeſs,' ſaid the youth, 'that is a moſt admirable argument; no wonder ſo many are enamoured of the new political juſtice.'

The affair of the countrymen being ſettled, by the youth giving them a crown to drink his health, we were proceeding towards the inn in full cavalcade, when a poſt-chaiſe driving up with a ſingle gentleman, he ordered the driver to ſtop, and calling to the youth—'My Lord,' ſaid he, 'is it you? What in the world are you now upon? Some frolic, I ſuppoſe?'

'My dear friend,' replied the young gentleman, 'this is a fortunate meeting, a little accident has happened to our vehicle, and I will trouble you for a lift.'

'Upon my ſoul,' ſaid Adams, bowing profoundly, 'I humbly beg your pardon, my Lord, I hope nothing I have ſaid

ſaid will prejudice your Lordſhip; and if you will honour me by taking one of my cards, no man in the trade ſhall uſe you better.'

I was confounded at this abjection of ſoul, and walked forward without taking the ſmalleſt notice of the young nobleman.—This is a ſtrange world, ſaid I to myſelf; and it is plain, as Stupeo ſaid, that half mankind are fools and ſlaves to commerce, with all its train of ſelfiſh affections. Poor Adams has a weak ſoul, he ſees clearly what is right, he feels the invigorating rays of truth, but his habits of trade drag him from the daring height, and ſink him again into all the prejudices attached to property.

The inn where the ſtage was to ſtop was not the general rout for the ſtages; and it being only three in the afternoon, I determined to proceed on foot without waiting for the coachman, whom I had

not paid for my journey (but that was nothing); I was not to be prevented by prejudice and common-place rules from following that free-will, which I poſſeſſed in my breaſt, for the direction of my actions.

I ſtill felt the pains of my bruiſes, and walked forward ſlowly, admiring the beauty of the country, and reading the great book of Nature. I fell into a profound trance, and began to doubt my own exiſtence, which is very neceſſary, according to all philoſophers, as we thence proceed in ſynthetic order to erect hypotheſis as upon a baſe. The faſhionable Hume doubted whether he thought he exiſted; but I went farther, I doubted whether I doubted that I thought I did not exiſt, and from thence proceeding to eſtabliſh the axiom, *Cogitas ergo ſum*, I think therefore I am. I began to think that I did not think, that I thought at all, when I was awaken-

ed by the ſound of ſeveral voices; and looking up, I perceived coming along the road a man on horſeback, with ſeveral people ſurrounding him; one held the reins, and two others, with conſtables ſtaves, held him on each ſide.

A ſight ſo ſhockingly ſhameful to human nature, and the natural freedom of man, arouſed me to attempt ſome noble exploit. I darted forward, and brandiſhing my cudgel—'What right,' cried I, 'have you to impriſon your fellow man? This is a ſhameful abuſe of power, it is all ſociety hunting down an unfortunate individual, who has ten thouſand chances againſt him, eſpecially if brought to trial *.'

'He is an highwayman and a murderer,' replied ſeveral, 'and you look like a madman.''

* Godwin.

'That

'That is nothing to the purpose,' cried I, kindling into patriotic frenzy, at recollecting some of the arguments of the great Stupeo, and the maxims of political justice. 'The man who professes himself ready to commit murder, seems to be scarcely a less dangerous member of society than he, who having already committed murder, has no apparent intention to repeat his offence *.—Unless this man appeared ready, and in a situation to repeat his offence, political justice requires him to be left at his own discretion. He is no more likely to repeat the crime than any man here, for aught you can tell; and no man ought to be deprived of his liberty on presumption.'

'Pelt the madman,' cried several clowns, 'Whoever heard such nonsense? A murderer is not to be punish-

* Godwin's Political Justice, page 761.

ed for committing the crime, but appearing ready to commit it.'

'Certainly,' cried I, 'could you hear the mythological, metaphyſical, philoſophical Stupeo, you would not heſitate a moment bowing before almighty truth and moral light; but if you are like ſtupid beaſts, deaf to the voice of reaſon I inſiſt that you liberate the priſoner."

So ſaying, I ſeized the bridle from the man who held it, and the highwayman ſticking his ſpurs in the beaſt, rode over the conſtable, and would have gained his liberty, had not a ſturdy clown levelled a ſtone at his head, which brought him over his horſe. I was ſeized by ſeveral at once, and notwithſtanding a ſtout reſiſtance, I was dragged like a ſlave, and forced againſt my will into an inn upon the road.

Are theſe the laws, the deteſtable maxims

maxims of ſociety? cried I, Am I to be confined here as a priſoner of ſtate, for attempting to reſcue an injured man from the tyranny of the law? O that the glorious day were come, when every man ſhall act from the divine impulſes of his will, and reaſon and liberty be acknowledged as the preſiding deities.

While I was exclaiming to myſelf, a conſtable entered, and informed me, that as I was deemed either intoxicated or touched in the head, it had been agreed, that on my paying five pounds as a compenſation to thoſe I had wounded, they would not enter an action againſt me, otherwiſe I ſhould be ſent to the county gaol for attempting a reſcue.

'Society,' cried I, 'I deteſt thy barbarous maxims and rights: what times! what country is this! where a man ſhall be impriſoned for an act of moral virtue in the eye of political juſtice, and be ob-

liged to pay for his liberty? Dear, dear liberty! what are five pounds to thee? Here, take the money, and permit me to fly from the whole herd of mankind. O, my dear Stupeo, would that I could diſcover thy retreat; ſome philoſophic retirement conceals the brightneſs of thy genius from mankind.'

'There is a return chaiſe for London at the door,' ſaid one of the waiters, 'are you going that way?'

'Any way,' ſaid I; and following him, I entered the chaiſe, and was driven rapidly towards London.

I always make it a rule to read the great book of Nature, and philoſophiſe as I go along the road; and I could not but be delighted to ſee the great book bound in green, with variegated edges of trees and flowers. Now, thought I, is this chaiſe an idea or a reality; I cannot

not prove it by argument to be real, it is therefore an idea, a whirling idea: now I have a very ſtrong impreſſion of this whirling idea; I wonder if I was to ſtep out into what ſeems an highway to my eyes (but which may be in fact the Red Sea), I ſhould ſtill continue whirling to London. This was a very metaphyſical problem, which nobody but the faſhionable Hume, the conundrumic Berkely, or the great Stupeo could reſolve.

The cries of *No Popery* rouſed my attention, and I perceived we were entering the metropolis. *No Popery* was written upon every houſe, and a parcel of ragged fellows, with No Popery chalked upon their hats, ſtopped the chaiſe, and demanded money.

'For what?' ſaid I, 'I don't care any thing about Popery; a wiſe man will have no religion at all, becauſe the prejudices and narrow principles of re-

ligious ſects will prevent his mind expanding to the broad beams of truth.'

'No gammon!—Tip us the grub!' cried ſeveral greaſy fellows. 'He's a Popery man! a Roman Catholic! and an enemy to the church!' roared out others, while the words 'Go it! go it!' ſounded around me, and a ſhower of mud and ſtones nearly overwhelmed me, ſmaſhing the glaſs of the chaiſe, and almoſt knocking down the driver.

'You are a ſet of raſcally cowards,' cried I: 'will any man of you fight me: I will die in the cauſe of freedom.'—A ring! a ring! was ſhouted and formed; and ſtripping off my coat and hat, I threw them into the chaiſe, which drove away from the fury of the mob.

There is ſomething generous in a mob; we there ſee the firſt germ of juſtice, generoſity, and magnanimity; we ſee that a giant of a man ſhall not be allowed

allowed to annihilate a little one. 'Tis true, that the love of novelty often inclines them to promote a quarrel where it might be reconciled: but no man ſhould be aſhamed to box in a juſt cauſe, eſpecially if he remembers the value of the pugiliſtic ſcience at Athens and Sparta: and why, becauſe I am better dreſſed ſhould I refuſe to enter the ring with a dirty antagoniſt, whom I may have injured? Whoever has read the novels of a very great dramatiſt, muſt be ſtruck with the beauties of boxing; an art, which I hope will ſuperſede the uſe of piſtols between jealous lovers and injured huſbands.

A champion being found, he came forward with an aſpect horridly ferocious. He was a great-boned Iriſhman, and all the vile paſſions of human nature were written in his countenance. His ſavage appearance inclined the mob in my favour, who uttered a long roar

of applauſe when I intrepidly determined to ſtand the conteſt. I had taken ſeveral leſſons at College, and knew the moſt ſcientific motions, ſo that the difference was not very great, and we immediately fell to *.

After ſix or ſeven rounds I marked an opening in his right guard, and with a well-placed ſide ſtroke, cut a long rip in his forehead, from whence the blood ſtreamed into his eyes, nearly blinding him, at which the mob (who are always generous) roared with a tumult of admiration and pleaſure. I now had conſiderable advantage, and though I had three teeth jammed into my mouth, I broke one of his ribs, and levelled him

* See the elegant reaſons for boxing in Anna St Ives and Hugh Trevor: two Novels, which the democratic Reviews hold up as ſamples of virtue and morality. 'Tis true, if blaſphemy and curſes are virtue and morality, theſe offſprings of the new ſchool have an ample claim.

with

with a full blow upon the ground, where he turned black in the face, and was left for dead.

A hackney coach was inſtantly preſſed into my ſervice, and I was conducted by the mob in triumph to a public-houſe, where they drank themſelves half drunk in the joy of my having conquered.

Though I had at firſt been in conſiderable danger of being murdered, yet my ſubſequent valour had rendered me dear to them all; ſo true is it, that pure human nature can diſcern truth when it deſcends to the level of their own ideas.

I was here cleared of gore, and refreſhed with ſome cordials. I had loſt my coat and hat, and had not paid the chaiſe, which I knew not where to find; but theſe were mere partial evils. A

generous blackſmith accommodated me with a coat, and a butcher inſiſted I ſhould take his red and blue cap for love, for he had never ſeen a better cock in his life, as tough as bull-beef. My dreſs was completed by a pair of trowſers, and a large cockade of blue ribbon.

It was now near eight o'clock. The mob who were drinking in the ſtreet were more than a thouſand ſtrong, and the ſhouts and vociferations of No Popery! Lord George Gordon for ever! rent the air.

A man, dreſſed like a chimney-ſweeper, with No Popery gilt on a blue ribbon round his hat, came familiarly up to me, and taking me by the hand, led me into a corner of the room.—'Are you engaged?' ſaid he.—'No,' I replied, 'I know of no engagement.'—'I beg

I beg pardon,' he returned, 'I thought, by the clothes you wear underneath, you were one of us.'

'I am always for the greateſt good,' I replied; 'in ſeeking a magnificent object, we are not to regard the means.'

At theſe words he claſped his arms round me, nearly ſmothering me with ſoot.—'I know,' ſaid he, 'you are a man of education—all London will ſhortly be in flames, and the cauſe of mankind will be ſucceſsful. We have caſt aſide prejudices and human frailties; it is neceſſary in the great labour of a revolution. We have at our command ſome thouſand inſurgents, who, with a little more diſcipline, may be brought to face the regulars, and then deſpotiſm will tumble with a tremendous craſh; the very earth will be ſplit by its fall, and the gulph of hell yawn and ſwallow it up.'

'O glo-

'O glorious!' ſaid I, 'then the great day is dawning. But what are thoſe cries of No Popery?'

'It is our watch-word. The ignorant believe they are fighting for religion, but we guide them and direct where the ſtorm ſhall fall. The paſſions of men muſt be raiſed, their rational ſenſes muſt be confounded with terrific reports, before the maſs can be rouſed; but there are always a ſufficient number of profligates and vagabonds to join in with any thing.—You appear one of the true men; you will be a great man in the new ſyſtem of things. At this moment the mob are plundering Newgate; I am wanted in another place; I beg you will direct the mob to Snow-hill, for I am certain you may lead them any where. I have ſtudied the mobs of different nations, and they are all alike. Go then and proſper.'

I was

I was on fire at the glorious idea of emancipating the victims of tyranny and oppreſſion, of opening the cells to the heart-ſick offender, who could not hope any redreſs from thoſe laws which condemned him.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

THE VAGABOND ACHIEVES SEVERAL NOBLE EXPLOITS—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING IN THE CELLS OF NEWGATE—A SLIGHT IDEA OF A REVOLUTION.

I Deſcended amongſt the mob, and graſping a pole with blue colours, and the words *No Popery* inſcribed upon it—'Let us go,' cried I, 'my dear boys. No Popery! Lord George Gordon for ever!' A loud and repeated huzza rent the air, and the prodigious maſs of people preſſed after me towards Newgate.

gate. I was aſtoniſhed in myſelf at the change of my fortune: I had but an hour before been in danger of being ſtoned by the very mob that, under my commands, would have made no ſcruple of ſetting London on fire But ſuch is always the reward of great talents in moments of popular commotion; it is then great men are brought forward from obſcurity.

Thouſands were already aſſembled before the auguſt depoſit of trembling victims: our reinforcement was received with the triumphant ſhouting of the patriotic bands, who felt the energy of liberty pulſating in every artery. The air was crimſoned with the flames of the jailor's houſe, and his furniture was caſt into a bonfire, which ſparkled in my eyes like an offering to the Goddeſs of Reaſon, or like that glorious flame which conſumed all bonds and engagements when

when equality was eſtabliſhed by Lycurgus at Sparta.

I haſtened to ſecond the attack upon this grand fortreſs, by leading my followers into Newgate-ſtreet, where, with ſledge hammers, crows, and iron palliſadoes, we ſoon broke an entrance into theſe deteſtable abodes, where the poor criminals were panting for freedom. With an high ladder, and in the ſight of thouſands, I ſcaled the lofty walls, exulting as I roſe at the glorious proſpect before us, and waving my colours as a trophy of conqueſt.

We ſoon penetrated into the wards of this almoſt impenetrable building, which ſhort-ſighted politicians might have ſuppoſed capable of repulſing an invading army: but the energies of the people are unreſiſtible when determined on emancipation, and *unoppoſed*.

Fire-

Fire-balls and fire-brands ſoon ſet the timbers in flames. I ran from one ward to the next, and from cell to cell, ſounding the tidings of liberty, and receiving a thouſand bleſſings from thoſe tongues which had too often been turned to curſes and execrations. Pickpockets, cut-purſes, ſhop-lifters, and felons of every denomination, hailed the dawn of returning freedom, and ſprang forward to a glorious conſummation, helping us to deſtroy this dreadful tomb to all who deſpiſe the laws, and claim the natural privilege of dividing property.

The flames raged and ran with rapidity among the thick oak planking, which cracked with the noiſe of thunder; the ſmoke and heat was nearly ſuffocating, and many in their over eagerneſs to clear the dungeons, fell martyrs in the glorious cauſe. In a cell which I had nearly overlooked, I found a miſerable wretch half naked upon the ground. I had broke

broke open his door with an iron crow, and the firſt object he ſaw was a tremendous blaze of light, which proceeded from the oppoſite wainſcot on fire. He had long heard the ſhouts of exulting thouſands, and the burſtings of the fire. 'Heaven and earth,' cried he, 'is the day of judgment come? Or have I ſunk alive into hell? Are you a fiend?' ſaid he, ſtaring wildly, and ſtarting from me. 'Are you come to pitch me into everlaſting flames?'

To ſay truth, my figure was not a little hideous, for I was covered with all ſorts of dirt, ſwelled in my face from the different bruiſes I had received, and ſtreaked with blood from a cut in my head by the falling of a plank: but how was I aſtoniſhed to perceive by the light of the fire, the great Stupeo, the wonderful philoſopher, in chains.

'Exult,' cried I, 'you are revenged, my

my maſter, my tutor, liberty has reared her ſtandard on theſe walls, and the fabric of ſelfiſh tyranny is tumbling about our ears. Haſte, get theſe irons off, and join in the noble cauſe of liberty and man.'

Stupeo immediately ſtarted up, uttering incoherent expreſſions of joy. I hurried him from the chamber of his ſtudies into the preſs-yard, where his deteſtable fetters were knocked off, and being refreſhed with a large goblet of wine from the cellars of the gaoler, we went into the ſtreet to enjoy the exultation of the ſurrounding multitude, and the moſt tremendous ſight that can well be conceived; a ſight which awed the military into inaction, and ſtruck the magiſtrates into a panic of the moſt puſillanimous nature: but cowardice is ever allied to terror, and I ſtood conſidering how beſt to exert the force now in action, that the greateſt blow might be

be ſtruck to the preſent deteſtable ſyſtem of monopoliſed property.

Part of the army of patriots remained upon the walls, and dancing round the ruins to prevent every attempt at extinguiſhing the flames: the reſt followed Stupeo and myſelf, who encouraged them to perſevere and be free. The crowd would have deſtroyed Langdale's, a large diſtillers, in Holborn, but I repreſented that this was a paltry buſineſs, when we had yet to open the doors of ſo many gaols to the liberation of our brethren; beſides, we had already near four hundred felons amongſt us, and the augmentation of this force was a grand point, for who could fight for freedom like thoſe who had experienced its loſs? Or who would level property like thoſe who had nothing to loſe, and all to gain.

As we proceeded, every paſſenger was ſtopped and plundered, and from every

houſe was collected, two or three times over, conſiderable contributions. I would have remonſtrated, but a fellow, who had been confined on a charge of murder, and whom I had liberated, ſwore he would rip me up alive if I attempted to prevent it; and indeed, though his argument was not in the line of reaſon, Stupeo reconciled me to the practice.

'In revolutions and public commotions,' ſaid he, 'no man in Athens was allowed to be neutral: every man who does not fight for us, ought to be conſidered as againſt us; and if we follow the new philoſophy, we ſhould ſhew no mercy to thoſe who ſupport the ſyſtem of deſpotiſm *.'

Having liberated the priſoners in Clerkenwell, our forces were divided

* An article in the Jacobin Creed.

to

to objects of leſs moment. That diviſion under our direction proceeded to Lord Mansfield's; and there liberty and rational principles received a complete triumph over all regular order. The muſty records of precedents, caſes and law, made a fire to warm the people they had ſo long enſlaved: I own I wiſhed to have preſerved ſeveral works of curioſity and art, but Stupeo would not ſuffer a thing to be taken.—'Let them all periſh together,' ſaid he, 'we have yet remaining too much of art to be happy; let us not ſtain the cauſe with the appearance of ſelfiſhneſs.'

'But why then,' ſaid I, 'are we to plunder the poor inhabitants? Surely it were better to ſupply ourſelves from ſtores like theſe?

'No,' anſwered he, 'can you not perceive that the deſtruction of property muſt be the grand aim; from thoſe who have

have little we muſt take that little, and the hoards of affluence muſt be utterly deſtroyed. As long as one ſingle cart-load of property remains in any country, there will be no genuine equality.'

From theſe ever-memorable exploits, I and Stupeo, with ſeveral ſelect leaders, retired to an obſcure public-houſe, to contrive and arrange the undertakings of the enſuing night. I already fancied myſelf as great as the immortal John the Painter.

At our meeting, ſeveral foreigners of *liberal principles** were preſent. A plan was propoſed for organizing the body of the people, and urging them to throw off the yoke of dependence, and declare themſelves free. A paper, titled *The*

* The cant word for no principles but thoſe of profligacy, irreligion, &c.

*Thunderer**, was drawn up by Stupeo, which he hoped would kindle the glow of enthuſiaſm, and awake the people to their rights.

The priſons were condemned to deſtruction, that none of our brave followers might be deprived of their liberty. The New-river water was to be cut off, that we might have the town effectually at command, and compel thoſe weak and obſtinate people who were afraid of joining our ſtandard. The Muſeum we fixed upon as a good depoſit for ſtores after all that trumpery ſhould be burnt, which gives edge to a childiſh employment of time. The toll-houſes on the bridge we condemned, becauſe bridges ought to be built without ſubjecting individuals to expence. The Eaſt-India warehouſes and the Cuſ-

* See the Political Magazine for 1780.

tom-

tom-houſe we conſidered as large lumber rooms for monopoliſing property that belonged to every body.

The Tower and the Bank were two grand objects, behind which we could entrench in defiance of the troops which were drawing towards the town from every quarter; and indeed our plans were too extenſive and grand for me to detail in minutiæ.

In the attack upon the Bank I was ſeverely wounded in the hand by a muſket bullet, for there the ſoldiers recovered their thirſt for blood, and fired upon the innocent people, who were glorioufly fighting for liberty. We determined there to conquer or die, being ſtrongly reinforced by the Borough patriots, who had burnt the toll-houſes on the bridge in their rout. To place a juſt ſenſe of our cauſe before them, an horſe, loaded with the chains of New-

gate, was driven through the crowd in place of colours, and every breaſt beat with throbs of vengeance at the ſight.

A body of ſavages on horſeback cut down ſeveral with their ſwords, and the infantry made uſe of their infernal muſkets, which ſeverely galled the unarmed patriots. It was ſhocking to hear the tremendous roar of exulting rage ſink after every platoon, as if it was exhauſted.

Poor Stupeo, who ſtood beſide me encouraging a band of thoſe whom the ignorant call felons to an attack on the infantry with iron ſpikes and bottles, received a ſhot that laid him dead beſide me. The mob, who now began to faint from the unequal conteſt, trampled over him, and hurried me along with them. I endeavoured to rally them, and one of them daſhed a link into my face, which I returned by ſhooting him with a piſtol,

for

for I had found a very good pair in an houſe we had gutted, and nothing could be more proper than turning the weapons of tyrants againſt themſelves.

I was confounded at the fickle diſpoſition of a mob, which can only ariſe from their want of inſtruction; and ſo long as what is called civil order and police exiſts, I very much fear the people will never unanimouſly riſe: but, however, truth is making a rapid progreſs, and it muſt irreſiſtibly break forth into a glorious day.

The mob would have executed ſummary juſtice upon me for the murder of the link-bearer, had I not eſcaped through the narrow ſtreets into Holborn, where Langdale's (the diſtiller) was on fire. Torrents of ſpirits ran in the ſtreets, and being played upon the neighbouring houſes for water, augmented the danger and the flames.

Here the military deſtroyed a great number of patriots, who were dancing round the fire, or tumbling the furniture out at the windows; while many others fell victims to the half rectified ſpirits which ran in torrents through the ſtreets.

I ſaw clea ly it was a loſt cauſe, for want of a more regular organization, and I lamented that we had not made better uſe of the time allowed by the timidity (they called it humanity) of the government; we ſhould then have reduced the whole city to an heap of aſhes, from which liberty, like a phœnix, would have ariſen in ten-fold ſplendour: the maſs of luxury and of wealth would have been annihilated, and the partial injury individuals might have received would have been amply compenſated by the new order of things which muſt have ariſen.

It would have been, as Stupeo often ſaid,

ſaid, talking of revolutions like the fermentation of anarchy, which from all the rage of luſt, of revenge, of murder, of cruelty, of rapine, and unheard-of diſtreſs, ſinks into a glorious and heart-ſoothing calm*.

Indeed, nothing could be more dreadfully great than the appearance of London on that glorious night. The large body of fire iſſuing from the different conflagrations of the Fleet Priſon, King's Bench, Toll-houſes on Blackfriar's-bridge, Mr. Langdale's two immenſe warehouſes full of ſpirits, and a vaſt number of ſmall fires, together with the illuminations, which of themſelves would have rendered the ſtreets as light as day, all aſcending into the air, and conſolidating together, formed an atmoſphere of flames, impreſſing the mind of the ſpectator with an idea, as if not only the

* Pain and Godwin on Revolutions and Anarchy.

whole metropolis was burning, but all nations yielding to the final conſummation of all things. But how much greater muſt have been the ſight, amidſt which even the ſoul of a modern philoſopher might tremble, would it have been to ſee the flames chaſing the diſtracted people from ſtreet to ſtreet; to ſee the enemies of liberty periſhing in heaps before the burning ſword of retributive juſtice; to ſee the rage of luſt deſpoiling thoſe diſdainful beauties, whoſe love heretofore was only to be won by cringing; to ſee trembling tyrants biting the duſt, and drinking their own blood as it mingled in the kennels; to hear amidſt all this uproar the thunder of cannons, the whiſtling of bullets, the claſhing of ſwords, the tumbling of houſes, the groans of the wounded, the cries of the conquerors; and ſee, amidſt the blazing and red-hot ruins, the ſons of Freedom and Liberty waving the three-coloured banners dropping with the blood of their enemies,

enemies, and hailing the everlaſting Rights of Man!!!

Ah! how dear muſt ſuch a ſcene be to the *friends of liberty* and *univerſal man;* nor ſhould the paultry conſideration of two or three thouſand being maſſacred, to ſatiate private revenge, be taken into the account of ſo great, ſo immortal a conſideration.

CHAPTER VII.

HUMANITY OF A MOB—THE VAGABOND IS UNFORTUNATELY PREVENTED ATTAINING A MARTYRDOM—GAMING DEMONSTRATED TO BE THE ONLY LIBERAL SCIENCE.

I Was ſo agitated by the failure of our glorious cauſe, that I was nearly putting a period to my exiſtence, eſpecially when I recollected the ſhocking and infamous ſyſtem of a conſtitution, which none but fools can ſee *any one* virtue in; and this was, that every man who had ſuffered by this effervescence of liberty, would receive ſatisfaction for his

his loſſes, and thus the people would be made to pay for what they had deſtroyed; ſo that our failing in the ultimatum was worſe than if nothing had been done, and we had in fact been ſtrengthening the laſh for ourſelves. To be ſure, there was this alleviating reflection, that the cowardly and ſelfiſh citizens would have to contribute equally with the patriots.

I wiſhed myſelf away from ſuch a deteſtable country as England, where property is guarded with as much vigilance as if it were a deity; and no man, however obnoxious, can be plundered, without a right of retribution from the pariſh or county, a thing totally unknown in other countries, and quite inimical to genuine liberty.

My wound, my bruiſes, and fatigue had nearly exhauſted my ſtrength; for till mind ſhall overcome matter, the human frame ſtands in need of repoſe and

ceſſation from action, though it is aſtoniſhing what exertions we are capable of, when the mind is engaged in great exploits; and I have little doubt but when the new ſyſtem is eſtabliſhed, we ſhall have no need of what is called *ſleep*, nor ſhall we require *food*, both of theſe being ſuperfluous to *ſpiritual ſubſtance*. In fact, as my dear Stupeo ſays, why may we not one day become immortal *?

I did not regret the loſs of this prodigious great man any other than as ſociety loſt an invaluable member, for I had ſtrengthened my mind to the caſe, and ſhould, with the immortal Brutus, have looked with indifference on the

* One would be tempted to ſuppoſe the man inſane, who ſhould maintain that the human ſoul was a material ſubſtance, and had no exiſtence after death, but that he had no doubt when we had caſt away our prejudices, we ſhould become *immortal* in this preſent world. Such conſiſtency is the doctrine of Godwin, Holcroft, &c. &c.

death

death of any relation or friend, theſe being mere partial evils, and not to be ſeparated from extenſive deſigns.

It is not politically juſt that a wiſe man ſhould expoſe himſelf careleſsly to martyrdom for the ſake of liberty, till he has well weighed whether the human ſpecies will be moſt benefited by his life or death. To run raſhly on the point of a bayonet was wrong, becauſe I might yet live to illumine the world, and catch ſome glorious criſis—while truth would not receive any promotion by my death at the preſent inſtance: I therefore retired unnoticed amidſt the univerſal alarm.

I was very little acquainted with the town, having been there only upon one or two vacations; but the light of the fires and the brilliance of the illuminations were ſufficient guides. Several watchmen looked as if they intended

to

to ſtop me, but awed by the dignity of my countenance, though covered with blood and dirt, they all ſlunk away, ſo powerful is the effect of innocence and impreſſive reſolution.

I arrived oppoſite a bonfire, where the furniture of a Roman Catholic milliner was blazing; it made but a paltry light, compared with the many others that gleamed in the air; and the noble band that danced around it being aſhamed to be out-done in their patriotic exertions, in the goodneſs of their hearts dragged the bed from beneath two infants* and a woman in labour, which gave a great but tranſient addition to the fire. To be ſure, the poor woman died of fright, but that could not be helped in ſuch a caſe; and it is the ill-education of women which introduces all ſorts of nervous affections.

* Political Magazine, 1780.

In

In a little back alley I met an old woman carrying ſomething in her apron; at my approach ſhe appeared very much frightened. 'What have you got there?' ſaid I. She replied, trembling, 'Only ſome trifles, your honour, that I have preſerved from the fire.' I required to ſee thoſe trifles. Accordingly ſhe opened her apron, diſplaying ſome gold fringe, a ſilver cenſor, and two cups, which ſhe had taken from a Romiſh chapel. 'You are heartily welcome,' ſaid I, 'to theſe ſpoils of ſuperſtition; I wiſh you had as many more: but now, can you tell me where I may ſleep ſecurely from unwelcome intruders?'

'Aye, and that I will: come to my little lodging, my dare babe, you need not be frighted at nobody there.'

Accordingly I followed her into a miſerable houſe, up three pair of ſtairs, into a back garret. A crucifix ſtood on a chim-

a chimney-piece, and a ſtring of beads hung upon a nail, by which I ſoon diſcovered that this good lady, who had been plundering a chapel, was a Romaniſt; and I rejoiced to find that knowledge had reached even into a back garret, and taught an old woman to diſcern the cauſe of mankind from the bigotry of prieſtcraft.

With this hoſpitable creature, who was an Iriſh woman, I determined to reſide. Being extremely jaded and pained by my bruiſes, I went immediately to bed, and ſhe haſtened to procure me ſome refreſhment. She would have fetched a ſurgeon, but I utterly deteſted the whole crew of leeches, who deal in a cant jargon (like the prieſts of Cybelle) which nobody underſtands.

When the fermentation of my ſpirits began to cool, in ſpite of all my efforts I became nearly diſtracted. I had loſt

three of my teeth, and my whole body was bruiſed: the cut in my head, to be ſure, was only an inch and half long, and a finger deep; but I had a muſket wound in my hand, which had taken off half my little finger, and grazed the reſt, ſo that I was not in the moſt comfortable ſituation. I raved like a madman at the loſs of the noble opportunity, which might not occur in a whole generation.

Before morning I became wholly delirious, burning with a violent fever; and now it was the old woman introduced a lame apothecary from the neighbourhood. I was tortured, bliſtered, and blooded, and underwent worſe than a thouſand deaths in the courſe of three weeks, when I recovered my ſenſes, and awoke as from a dream. I then learnt, to my infinite regret, that the kind old woman had been taken up and hanged, adding another to the long liſt of victims to deſpotiſm. The apothecary pretended that

that the old woman had attempted to criminate me reſpecting the ſtolen articles, and that I ſhould have been taken up had he not ſworn I had been under his care prior to the riots; and it turned out, on the trial of the old woman, that ſhe had been ſeen alone entering the chapel.

I reproved him ſeverely for his falſification of truth.—'Truth, ſaid I, 'ought at all times and in every ſituation to be ſpoken. Friendſhip—every thing ſhould bend to omnipotent truth. Stratagems of all kinds are deteſtable, even in war they are unjuſtifiable; and I hope tactics will be ſo ſimplified, that they will be reduced to a few general maxims, and then no man will need the experience of a long life to become a general; it will then become a generous, manly, and open ſyſtem*. Beſide, in concealing

* See Godwin's Political Juſtice. In one page he

concealing the truth, you have done me an irreparable injury, you have ſunk my name in obſcurity, you have deprived me of the honour of a public death.'

'It is not too late yet,' replied he, 'if you have an ardent deſire to ſwing; but I thought you had the appearance of a gentleman."

he declaims againſt war, with all the fire of words, and in another he tells us he hopes it will one day become a generous, manly, and open ſyſtem. So much for conſiſtency.—It may not be unworthy to remark the eternal babble kept up by the new philoſophers concerning war. War is ſavage, war is inhuman, war is deſpotic, &c. &c. Granted. Who does not know this. But there are wars which are *inevitable*, in which, to be paſſive, would be tame ſubmiſſion to deſtruction.* The people fortunately begin to open their eyes, and ſee into the hypocriſy of theſe friends to the human race. They ſee that a republic can outſtretch the fartheſt ſtride of kingly ambition, and graſp at *univerſal* dominion.

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To this obſervation I made no reply, being agitated with the loſs I had ſuffered.—'All mankind,' cried I, 'would have ſeen an example of magnanimity in the cauſe of freedom. Oh, my beloved Stupeo! had you been alive, you would have gloried in hearing the name of your pupil in the ſame ſentence with Maſſienello, William Tell, Oliver Cromwell, Cato, Leonidas, *Jaffier*, and Judas Maccabæus.'

'We muſt take at leaſt three more ounces of blood,' muttered the apothecary, and went out of the room.

I now plainly perceived that I had a raſcally, ignorant, ariſtocratical apothecary, who meant to bleed me to death out of ſpite, that my name might for ever be loſt to mankind. I therefore ſearched for my piſtols, which I had thruſt under the bed; and that never having

having been diſturbed ſince I laid down upon it, I had the ſatisfaction to find them. The apothecary ſoon after entered, with a ragged attendant, and made preparations to tie my arm, when graſping one of my piſtols, I drew the trigger, and ſhould have terminated his practice had the piece been loaded.

'Do you mean to murder me,' ſaid I, 'with all this bleeding? Does Nature ever bleed her patients? and her you ought to follow in all things. You think I am mad, but I have ſenſe enough to tell you never again to come in my ſight.'

'Who is to pay my bill?' ſaid the frightened dealer in drugs. 'I ſaved you from the gallows, and from dying raving mad.'

'How could I have died both ways?' ſaid I. 'As to your bill, I have more need

need of the money myſelf, and the greateſt good is always to be preferred.'

'But my attendance and medicine muſt be paid for.'

'What is your attendance? Ought not every man to labour for the good of his fellow men? I ſhould be guilty of political injuſtice were I to reward you for doing your duty.'

'But, Sir, I have dedicated my life to the practice of medicine: I have no other means of gaining a living, and cannot afford to practiſe for nothing.'

'That is not my fault, it is the ill-conſtruction of ſociety. In a ſtate well ordered, no man would receive wages, but every one would do what he eſteemed the greateſt general good. Had you ever liſtened to the leſſons of the great, the immortal Stupeo, you would have been

been convinced of what I ſay, and you would have diſdained a bribe to perform a duty.'

'Sir,' ſaid he, humbly, in a vile depending tone, 'when you reflect, you muſt obſerve that you only exchange one benefit for another. In ſociety all muſt mutually hang together, and if any part be diſordered, the whole organization muſt ſuffer. Men have a variety of genius, and what would become of the world if thoſe who were willing to work gave all their labour for the benefit of the idle? All human genius would then be cramped, and directed merely to the providing of food.'

'Peace, peace,' cried I, 'will you, an ignorant apothecary, a pounder of drugs, pretend to talk philoſophy with a diſciple of the everlaſting Stupeo?—Why, Sir, I could talk with you on this ſubject for ſeven years, and in five minutes

nutes you would not have a word more to ſay. Is it not, therefore, demonſtrable that you are in the wrong?'

'Well, Sir, pay me the trifle I require; it is only three guineas, and I have a numerous family.'

'A family!' replied I with indignation, 'and what buſineſs has ſuch fellows as you to get families? In the preſent ſyſtem, it is only bringing into the world a parcel of ſlaves.'

'But population is the riches of a country.'

'Granted,' cried I, 'in a good government, where the children are public property, and no one knows his relations; but in our ſyſtem children introduce all the infamous train of ſelfiſh and family connections, and ſhut up the bowels of compaſſion againſt the dear ſuffering

ſuffering Chineſe, who eat rotten meat and pounded rice.'

'Sir,' ſaid he, 'give me leave to ſay you talk in a very ſingular manner; your ſentiments would *unhinge the univerſe.*

'Come here,' cried I with tranſport, 'you own then the power of my arguments; I knew they muſt carry conviction; I ſhould die contented if I could only unhinge ſociety. I deteſt a claim, but you are a man of underſtanding, and in want. At preſent, I do not know on whom I could beſtow five guineas to do a greater good; take them—but remember that I ſhall always regret your having prevented my execution.'

'A very ſingular gentleman,' exclaimed he, overjoyed, 'give me leave to attend you in future for nothing.'

'As long as you pleaſe,' ſaid I, 'that is, the natural way, but I will not be blooded. The art of medicine is to follow nature. If the patient is ſick, 'tis a ſign nature wants to diſcharge, and you ſhould doſe him with emetics: if he is delirious, you ſhould apply ſtrong ſtimulants to increaſe the frenzy, as the ſooner it ariſes to the height, the ſooner a calm will enſue.'

I continued to take his drugs by way of experiment; but I am ſatisfied I owed my recovery alone to the natural ſtrength of my conſtitution. I had daily accounts of the ſufferings of the perſecuted patriots; and I debated with myſelf what line of life I ſhould purſue as the moſt rational, and in harmony with my principles.

I reſolved not to ſtoop to my father; I could as ill cringe to any man in power, and I deteſted every thing in al-

liance with trade as a debaſement of the human ſoul. Surely, thought I, I am born for ſomething more noble than to meaſure goods, or ſort the articles of commercial exchange: low and baſe minds may find ſatisfaction in ſuch employ, but the intelligence which learned to ſoar into the realms of ſcience, muſt not be chained down to ſuch groveling undertakings.

To amuſe my mind, I viſited a billiard table which was at no great diſtance from my lodging, and I found ſome entertainment from the exertions of ſkill. I there became acquainted with the moſt good-natured man in the world, whoſe name was Williams. I ſoon diſcovered that he was an advocate for the new philoſophy; and he proteſted that he could not in conſcience accept a living in the preſent ſyſtem of things in any other way than by gaming. 'Tis true,' ſaid he, 'the prejudices of mankind have

ſtigmatiſed it as ignoble, but it is of all ſciences the moſt natural; it brings lords, and all thoſe titled trumpery, down to a level with the moſt inſignificant of men: it introduces a freedom of diſcourſe, it detaches the mind from all thoſe bigoted notions called religion: it equaliſes property, by taking from the rich to give to the poor; and in one word, it is the moſt eligible way of living with honour and independence.'

'You charm me,' ſaid I, 'I once thought gaming was a fooliſh method of ſpending time, and calculated merely for the introduction of vice and diſſipation; I now ſee better, and it is to me ſingular how naturally the mind tranſides from one truth to another: but ſo it is with human nature. The progreſſion of knowledge is going forward with rapidity, and the wiſdom and experience of ages is diſcovered to be nothing at all in the eighteenth century.'

Williams

Williams propoſed, that as I was what he called new to the town, we ſhould divide our gains, to which I readily agreed, and we were for ſeveral nights very ſucceſsful, ſo that I had to my ſhare near two hundred pounds. The tranſient ſtate of human exiſtence loudly urged me to graſp at the preſent; and my college habits returning with force, I frequently ſpent whole nights with drinking parties.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. HUME'S ARGUMENTS FOR ADULTERY, WITH PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES — THE NEW MODE OF BENEVOLENCE.

I Was charmed one evening at the play, by a beautiful young woman, who was in company with an ill-humoured, jealous-looking, *illiberal* man. I attempted ſeveral times to addreſs myſelf to the lady, but his ſevere looks and lowering frowns compelled her to reſtraint, and I did not wiſh

wiſh to be the cauſe of increaſed domination.

I was extremely well dreſſed, for in theſe trifles one may as well appear like the reſt of the world, though I had more than once an intention to adopt the Roman Toga, on purpoſe to attract attention, for theſe matters go a great way with little men. I found that I gained the attention of the lady, who appeared uneaſy under her reſtraint, and I made a ſecret vow, to emancipate her from the bondage under which ſhe groaned.

I diſcovered, on farther inquiry, that ſhe was the wife of a citizen, who had married her when ſhe was extremely young, and extremely giddy; that they had two children, and were as happy as a tyrant and a coquet can be in wedlock.

I read over the Eſſays of the faſhionable Hume, where I found that adultery was one of the moral virtues, and perfectly agreeable to political juſtice. In volume 2, page 409, of his Eſſays, edition 1767, are theſe admirable words, which, ſingly, and unconnected with his other excellent principles, would be ſufficient to raiſe the book into public notice.—'Adultery,' ſays he, 'muſt be practiſed, if men would obtain all the advantages of life, if generally practiſed, it would ſoon ceaſe to be ſcandalous; and if practiſed ſecretly and frequently, it would, by degrees, come to be thought no crime at all.'—'Immortal Hume,' cried I, 'though thou doubteſt whether thou hadſt a ſoul, I doubt whether it be poſſible to doubt that thou hadſt a body.'

I determined to follow ſo great an idea, and it was not long before I contrived an interview. It is needleſs to ſay

ſay the lady ſoon became a convert to the prevailing principles of reaſon and nature; ſhe was diſguſted with her ſlavery, and wanted only an opportunity to exert the inborn freedom of her ſex. I engaged very neat lodgings for her, and began to enter into that ſtate, ſo congenial to the feelings of human nature and rational beings. I found her a very ſingular character, within a truly feminine form; ſhe had a ſoul of a maſculine energy; every thought of her mind ſeemed received by intuition. She was often right by this means, only in matters of mere ſpeculation; ſhe adopted one and rejected another, *by a ſort of tact*, and the force of a cultivated imagination; and yet, *though upon the whole ſhe reaſoned little*, it is ſurpriſing what degree of ſoundneſs was in all her determinations*.

* The reader may find many of theſe ſentiments in the Life of Mrs. Wolſtonecraft.

My diſpoſition frequently led me to waver in the practice I had adopted: I doubted, and I ſometimes feared; but my oſcillations and ſcepticiſm were fixed by her boldneſs. When a true opinion emanated in this way from another mind, the conviction produced in my own, aſſumed a ſimilar character. She did not deſcend to all the frivolous ſoftneſs of her ſex, which cuſtom has rendered general. She ſaw in woman, a being in no point inferior to man, except in perſonal proweſs; and ſhe diſdained all thoſe attractions, which poets and mankind have generally combined in perfecting the female character.

Our connection was that of friendſhip; we only met when mutual inclination prompted; and ſhe has frequently lamented, that the cuſtoms of the world prevented her mingling in all the purſuits and undertakings of men.—

men.—'Is there any ſex in ſoul?' ſhe would ſay, 'if not, what right have thoſe tyrants, the men, to exclude us from the ſenate, the bar, and the army? *Do we not pay taxes in every article we conſume?—And who are our repreſentatives in Parliament?*—It is an outrage againſt the inborn Rights of Women.'—'Why,' I would aſk, 'may not a woman be as capable of leading troops into the field as a general? Are they not perpetually playing cunning tricks? Soldiers and women I maintain to be equally alike: the officers are perpetually attentive to their perſons, fond of dancing, crowded rooms, adventures, and ridicule: like the fair ſex, the buſineſs of their lives is gallantry: they are taught to pleaſe, and they live only to pleaſe; yet they do not loſe their rank in the diſtinction of ſexes, for they are ſtill reckoned ſuperior to women, though in what their ſuperiority exiſts, beyond what

I have juſt mentioned, it is difficult to diſcover*.'

A woman of theſe ſentiments was congenial to my ſoul; our diſcourſes were a feaſt to the mind, in which the ſenſes had no ſhare. She frequently lamented the evils to which nature had neceſſiated her ſex in the article of children; a ſubject which ſhe never could diſcuſs with patience, it being an evil to which man was not ſubjected, and a badge of bondage not to be overthrown.

'Oh!' cried ſhe, one day to me, in a fit of enthuſiaſm, 'what ſignifies all the freedom of our ſouls, all the exaltations of our intellects, if we are to be confined for months to carry a burden which we have no means to lay down, and when the little wretch

* Rights of Women, part 1.

appears

appears in the world, what a dreadful idea:—with intellects that ſoar beyond the firmament, are we to be confined to ſwaddle and dandle an animal that has no ideas, and muſt at every moment deſtroy itſelf if we do not preſerve it? Oh horrid! that Nature did not provide ſome middle, ſome ſtupid, lumpiſh being, to rear and take care of the human progeny: why not make man an oviparous animal? Then we might have hatched the eggs in tempered ſtoves, as they do chickens in Egypt.'

I could not but admire this flaſh of idea, which was bold and grand, and new; indeed, all her ſpeculations were ſublime, *though ſhe reaſoned little* *. I had nearly overlooked an unpleaſant incident, which would have very much

* We are told in the Life of Mrs. Wolſtonecraft, that ſhe reaſoned little; thoſe who reaſon much will eaſily believe the fact.

grieved

grieved me, had it been occaſioned by me: but it was another dreadful conſequence of the preſent organization of ſociety, and gave me an additional reaſon to execrate the prejudices of mankind.

The huſband of my Mary had expected to find in her that ſoftneſs, complacency, and modeſty, which none but idiots ought to require, and which are merely calculated to fit a woman for a ſeraglio, or a play-thing to a voluptuary. He had taught himſelf to deſire a female, who might ſolace him after his buſineſs, with the endearments of a mind that had no will but his own, and ſought to oblige the man who preferred her to all her ſex. But Mary was of a different nature—her ſoul was not to be confined in a gilded cage, and ſhe would not bow to the baſhaw dictates of a maſter.

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The poor wretch became diſtracted at her loſs. In place of taking another, he was perpetually raving about conjugal affection, the claims of children, the duties of wives, and ſuch ignorant prejudices, till his ſenſes failed him, and his friends ſent him to Bethlem Hoſpital. The children, who had none to provide for them, were ſent to the work-houſe, to be educated by the public, where they caught the ſmall-pox, and died; an event, which ought naturally to have been expected, when they had not been inoculated, and could not throw any blame upon the conduct of their mother.

After this incident we continued on the moſt harmonious footing, for though Mary allowed herſelf the converſation of many of the oppoſite ſex, I did not experience the ſmalleſt uneaſineſs, for ſhe had as much right as myſelf to all the *eccentricities of fancy*; and I never thought

thought her the worſe for having contributed to the happineſs of other human beings.

About a month after this, the poor huſband died delirious, one of the moſt ſtupid deaths a man could die for the loſs of a woman: and Mary, thus freed from the ſhadow of a tie, appeared with me openly in public. Our neighbours made their uſual rude comments upon our intercourſe; and becauſe ſeveral gentlemen preſſed ſome handſome preſents upon Mary, they circulated the calumny, that I kept my wife as a proſtitute.

I deſpiſed all this; I was not to be frightened into any act becauſe of ſcandal, and I had long regarded marriage with ſo well grounded an apprehenſion, that, notwithſtanding the partiality for Mary that had taken poſſeſſion of my ſoul, I ſhould have felt it very difficult,

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at leaſt in the preſent ſtage of our intercourſe, to have reſolved on ſuch a meaſure; thus, partly from ſimilar, and partly from different motives, we felt alike in this, as we did perhaps in every other circumſtance that related to our intercourſe.

The human mind delights in variety. It is impoſſible we ſhould be for ever attached to one particular object. This change Mary experienced before myſelf; and ſhe parted from me for the protection of my friend Williams, who certainly poſſeſſed very powerful attractions, and was an athletic figure.

I regretted this ſeparation, but was not fool enough to repine; and I determined, according to the maxims of the great Stupeo, inſtantly to ſelect ſome other; though it was difficult to find one with ſuch an underſtanding as to march forward to the high goal of reaſon,

reaſon, trampling down prejudice, ſuperſtition, and character, in its career.

While I was in ſearch of ſuch a female, I wrote, by way of amuſement, a little tract, proving that girls ought to receive the ſame education as boys; that the ſame exerciſes ought to be purſued by each, and that beauty was not of the ſmalleſt value, when compared to a robuſt conſtitution, that feared neither wind nor weather. I proved, beyond contradiction, that every thing called the graces, ſuch as muſic, ſinging, dancing, timidity, delicacy, and baſhfulneſs, ought to be exploded.

I know not how it was, but my book was only bought by a few; and the ariſtocratic critics condemned it, as the work of a man who paid no regard to truth, provided he made himſelf ſingular; which was an abſolute libel, for I had loſt

loſt in the cauſe of truth, three teeth and half my little finger'

I confeſs I did not underſtand the ſubject. When a man writes a book of *methodical* information, he does not write becauſe he underſtands the ſubject, but he underſtands the ſubject becauſe he has written. He was an uninſtructed Tyro, expoſed to a thouſand fooliſh and miſerable miſtakes when he began his work, compared with the degree of proficiency to which he has attained, when he has finiſhed it*. In like manner, no man underſtands poetry or architecture, till he has written a poem or built a houſe.

Frequently, by way of amuſement, I attended the ſix-penny debating ſocieties, where truth is propagated in every branch, and religion and govern-

* Godwin's Enquirer, page 27.

ment

ment attacked from behind a maſked battery. A debate on the beauty of a coquet, or the merits of a beau, was ſufficient to introduce annotations on deſpotiſm, and ſatires on nobility, to the edification of the ignorant and young, who are thus prepared to receive all the enlightened principles of the new ſchool. It is aſtoniſhing what energy reaſon poſſeſſes, when adorned with all the flowers of oratory: and it was in vain that a man of narrow opinions ſhould endeavour to be heard; for let him ſay what he would, he was unattended to. I was however, diſguſted at a little trifle, for I could not endure the ſmalleſt duplicity, which is beneath the dignity of man, and ought not to be permitted even in the promotion of general knowledge. This trifle, was a quarrel between Citizen Cow and Citizen Calf, about which ſide of the queſtion they ſhould take; the one inſiſting that he could declaim beſt on

the

the ſide of liberty, and the other declaring his own talent lay in diſcovering faults. I was aſhamed that ſuch great men ſhould wrangle about the parts they were to act, like the performers of a country barn; and I could not but conſider, that the cauſe of liberty muſt ſuffer, when garbled by the palſied efforts of men, whoſe object was a dividend of ſixpences, to be ſpent the ſame evening in a debauch.

One evening, at the hazard table, a young man, who had been ſitting near ſix-and-thirty hours, attracted univerſal attention by the extravagant execrations he uttered, and the agitation of his mind. He proteſted that he was ruined and undone to all perdition.

My feelings are ever peculiarly alive to the ſufferings of my fellows, and though

though I endeavour to guard againſt falſe pity, I am frequently melting at the diſtreſſes of my fellow mortals. I followed the poor wretch home at a diſtance, and entering his room abruptly, I found him ſitting in a chair, with a fine young woman hanging on his ſhoulder weeping, and a child ſleeping in a cradle.

He ſtarted up confuſed at my entrance, and would have made an apology, but I ſoon tranquilliſed him, and preſſing him with the irreſiſtible arguments of truth to rely on my ſervices, he confeſſed that he had wronged an excellent maſter to a conſiderable amount, under the fallacious hope, that by hazarding it at the gaming table, he might acquire an independence, his ſalary being too ſmall to enable him to keep a family and appear as he muſt; that he had now loſt the means of concealing his crime, and ſhould bring ſhame

ſhame on his wife and his relations by a public death.

I was affected at the dreadful ſituation, for though his feelings were falſe, he having a juſt claim on his maſter's property, yet, in the preſent ſyſtem of things he would have all mankind againſt him; I therefore determined to let him have two hundred pounds, the whole amount of my caſh, which would cover his affairs for the preſent.

Returning home, I met with Williams at the door of a tavern, and acquainted him with my purpoſe.—'You know my ſentiments,' ſaid I, 'and you know of what little value I eſteem property when it is conducive to good. I have not *promiſed* Jackſon, becauſe promiſes are criminal, but I think at preſent it is the greateſt good I can do, and I have raiſed his hopes from the edge of

of deſpair, by my aſſurances of ſuccour.'

'But ſhall you not want it yourſelf, and how ſhall he repay it?'

'Hear,' cried I, 'the profound ſentiments of the infallible Stupeo, that moſt exalted of philoſophers. — My neighbour is in want of ten pounds which I can ſpare: there is no law to tranſfer my property to him, but in the eye of ſimple juſtice, unleſs it can be ſhewn that the money can be more beneficially employed, his claim is as complete as if he had my bond in his poſſeſſion, or had ſupplied me with goods to the amount. If two perſons ſhould offer, I muſt balance between them; it is therefore *impoſſible for me to confer upon any man a* FAVOUR, *I only do him a right**.

* Godwin's Political Juſtice. page 89.

'Stupeo,'

'Stupeo,' ſaid he, ſolemnly, 'was a man of the moſt exalted intellect, he was a prodigy amongſt men, a meteor in the path of ſcience, which blazed for a time, but was too brilliant to be permanent. His language was ſuperior to all the grovling maxims of men, and his eloquence muſt have rivalled the perſuaſion of Cicero.'

'I might ſay,' anſwered I, 'as Æſchines ſaid of Demoſthenes, if ſuch be the effects of mere repetition, what would you have ſaid had you heard himſelf?'

'We regret,' replied he, 'the deceaſe of great men; but when their principles are practiſed by their pupils, we ought to be content. At this moment I was ſearching for you, to throw myſelf into your protection, well aſſured that the juſtice of my claim

will convince you. I have loſt this night every farthing I poſſeſſed, and I am now under immediate apprehenſion of an arreſt for two hundred and fifty pounds: I am even told the bailiffs have been after me. To be deprived of liberty, is more dreadful to me than death; I never will ſupport it: I am determined in my purpoſe, and it remains for you to conſider whether the ſaving of a rational being is worth two hundred pounds.'

I felt myſelf in a diſtreſſing ſituation, and preſſed on both ſides by very urgent claims, the merit of which required reflection.—'My dear Williams,' ſaid I, 'more than ever I lament the death of the illuminated Stupeo; he would with one word have relieved our embarraſſment; but, tell me yourſelf, without any bias of prejudice or weakneſs,

weakneſs, which will be the greateſt refulting good.'

We walked ſeveral paces in ſilence. 'At length,' ſaid he; 'I would not appear ſelfiſh, I ſwear it by my love of truth and political juſtice, that both theſe caſes are ſevere, but I do think that mine has the greateſt claim upon you.'

'It is ſufficient,' ſaid I, 'you are right.' He accompanied me home, where I delivered him, within a guinea, of all I poſſeſſed. It was uſeleſs to viſit the young man when I could not relieve him, and I had no inclination to inſult diſtreſs. I was happy in having ſaved Williams from impriſonment, though the diſappointment Jackſon muſt endure in the failure of my offers now and then intervened, but I remembered that no man ought to

place dependence upon any but himſelf.

I cannot remember the concluſion of this incident without regret, and the reflection that philoſophy cannot always direct us amongſt the doublings and mazes of human affairs. The young man was apprehended the next day, and his wife running forward to the moſt ſiniſter concluſions, caſt herſelf into the Thames, where ſhe was unfortunately drowned.

I grieved, but grief was uſeleſs, after the event; I execrated the cuſtoms of mankind, and drew ſome comfort in remembering that I had probably ſaved Williams from equal calamity.—I haſtened to his lodgings, to pour out to him and Mary the tumults of an agitated ſoul, but I was informed that they had departed before break

of

of day, nobody knew where; and that a warrant was out againſt him for having cheated a gentleman with cogged dice.

I was ſtruck dumb at this account, which informed me that I was a beggar; and the woman of the houſe hinted that I was implicated in the buſineſs. My mind was, however, clear of this aſperſion; it was too manly to deſcend to other fineſſe than that of ſkill; but I could not reconcile the behaviour of Williams to any maxim of truth or political juſtice; for if there be not *common honeſty* amongſt thoſe the vulgar call rogues, how are the affairs of life to be conducted?

The accidents I had witneſſed reſulting from gaming, had ſtartled my mind, yet I preferred it to binding myſelf a ſlave to the caprices of any man. This reſource was now become dangerous. No man, from perſuaſion,

would render me a portion of the ſuperfluities he enjoyed, and in the midſt of ſociety which calls itſelf poliſhed, I muſt either labour in employ, beneath the dignity of a rational being, or periſh unpitied or unrelieved.

Occupied with theſe reflections, I returned to my lodgings, abſorbed in a gloomy melancholy. Mankind appeared to me a ſet of ſelfiſh, ſolitary animals in the midſt of ſociety, and ſo far from being aſſociated for mutual protection, they ſeem only to live for themſelves.

I remembered, in all its brilliance, the ſtate of nature, deſcribed by Rouſſeau, and enlarged by Stupeo. I repeated again and again *Il retourne chez ſes Egaux ;* and I determined to make the wilds of America my aſylum. In this intention I ſold every article of value, and changed my dreſs to that of

of which you ſee the remains, the better to paſs unmoleſted, having many reaſons to fear perſonal detection, for no man can be truly great, till he is become an object of hatred to nine-tenths of mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF MODERN TRUTH—MEDITATIONS ON A GIBBET—AND THE CONSEQUENCES.

I Determined to croſs the country of England to the North-Weſt, and propoſed to make obſervations upon man in my journey; for, as ſome writer has ſaid, that ought to be the object of all voyages and travels; and, as Pope ſays, "The proper ſtudy of mankind is man." Indeed, man may be ſaid to compoſe the firſt chapter of the great book

book of Nature: and before we pretend to a knowledge of all the chapters of that large book, we ought ſurely to be maſters of the firſt.

On the ſixth day of my journey, for I walked on foot, towards evening I arrived on the borders of an extenſive waſte; a large crowd of country people were aſſembled, and in deep debate about ſome new encloſures, which had ſhamefully infringed upon the common right. Some gentlemen were endeavouring to perſuade them, that by cultivating the uſeleſs ground, larger crops would be produced, which would create greater plenty, and render the articles of life cheaper.

All my patriotiſm was arouſed at the glaring impoſition, and taking advantage of a mound of earth, I requeſted to be heard.

'Can you liſten patiently, citizens,' cried I, 'to this deteſtable doctrine? Do you not know that the ground which now ſcarcely ſuſtains a gooſe, will then fatten an ox, and thus your oppreſſors will be enriched, and you will be ſtarved? You have an undoubted right to the whole ſurface of the earth, but if cultivation goes forward, you will be penned up in the highways: you will not have ſo much as a path left through a meadow; your very highways will be taken from you, and made into canals, by which every waggoner in the kingdom will be ruined; and what will you get by this ſpirit of improvement as they call it? Will they give you the ſurplus of what they cannot devour? No, they will pile it up in barns to rot, and make manure for a double crop. Open your eyes, citizens, and you will ſee the falſity of their ſpeeches: they tell you proviſions will be cheaper; I tell you they will not; and aſk yourſelves which you

are

are to believe, thoſe intereſted men, or I, whom you never ſaw before: I tell you, you ought to have proviſions for nothing.—Awake, citizens! remember that when you are driven from the high-ways, you will be like frogs in a gutter. Now is the time; a moment's delay, and you will be too late. Unite and tear up the fences, level the hedges before the cultivating ſpade has turned up the ſod. Would to heaven there was not a ſingle acre cultivated, and the then imperious rich would not monopoliſe proviſions. I ſee impatience in your eyes—I ſee the riſing flame of liberty and truth flaſh in your countenances.—Come then, down with the boundaries, thoſe badges of ſlavery, and tell all the world that you have as much right to the ſurface of the earth as you have to the air.'

This ſpeech was like an electric ſhock, every man confeſſed its truth, and the

triumph of patriotiſm was complete. In vain the gentlemen endeavoured to argue down the ſtorm; *no one wou'd hear them;* a plain demonſtration that their *arguments* were falſe. I tore up, with my own hands, one of the ſtakes, and in an inſtant the ariſtocratical encloſures were laid open again in a ſtate of nature. Oh, cried I to myſelf, Oh that Stupeo could witneſs this effuſion of reaſon, this march of philoſophy. But, alas! the great mythological, metaphyſical patriot, was firſt killed by a muſket bullet, and then trod to death by his friends.

While I ſtood witneſſing this tranſient ſtart of energetic freedom, I was ſuddenly ſeized by three of the gentlemen, and though I made a ſtrenuous reſiſtance, was ſoon overpowered. I called aloud for the country people to reſcue me (but the diſpoſition of a mob is always fickle), thoſe who a few minutes before hung with rapture on my words,

now

now ſeemed to rejoice in the new object raiſed to their attention.

I was chagrined, and as they led me on, I exclaimed aloud, 'Raſcals and cowards, is this the manner to treat a pupil of the great and immortal Stupeo? Is this treachery to be reconciled with political juſtice? For myſelf, I am not concerned, I glory in the martyrdom I ſhall ſuffer; but remember, that the axe which ſunders my head from my body, cuts at the ſame moment all your liberties.'

'Who in the world are you?' ſaid one of the gentlemen; 'you ſurely are not in your ſenſes, or you would not utter ſuch incoherent abſurdities.'

'Did I not tell you,' ſaid I, 'that I am a pupil of the great Stupeo, a man who, if he had been here, would have confounded you with his eloquence, and ſhaken

ſhaken all the prejudices and habits of your mind like an earthquake, which, at one trembling, overwhelms all the proud puny ſtructures of ignorant and tyrannical men.'

A gentleman on horſeback advancing towards us, ſtopped at the ſight of ſo tumultuous a proceſſion; and I knew him to be the ſame I had met in the ſtage. He recollected me, but ſeemed not to know me.

'How does your Lordſhip?' ſaid one of the gentlemen. 'We have here one of thoſe ſeditious impoſtors that go about the country deſtroying its peace, and telling palpable lies in a flowery language, which warms the paſſions, and runs away with ſober reaſon.'

'My Lord,' ſaid I, 'I am glad to ſee you, becauſe you ſhall be a judge of the ſubject in diſpute, and for which I am dragged

dragged along the public road like a traitor and a ſlave. What is truth? Can any circumſtance change the immutability of its nature? Is it not like thoſe mathematical axioms, which we only require to hear to underſtand? Think you that the ſenſes of the people are ſo dull, they do not comprehend the light of truth when it flaſhes in their eyes? Or, as the ſublime Stupeo would have ſaid, when truth, like a volcano, burſts forth on the darkneſs of night—its thunderings ſhall awaken the dormant ſenſes of mankind—its lightnings ſhall glitter in their eyes like the brilliant morning of ſcience—its lava ſhall bear down all oppoſition, overwhelming all the puny barriers of ſtate—its cinders will ſcatter deſtruction upon its enemies, and the devaſtation it ſpreads (like a revolution) ſhall be momentary, giving place to a tenfold fecundity.'

'But,' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'not to queſtion

queſtion the *truth* of your bombaſtic metaphor, you forget that this *devaſtation* would ſweep away all the then generation.'

'And what is one generation,' I returned, 'or what are ten generations to the reſulting good? Are we always to be as imbecile as infants? I have no doubt, that when reaſon acts in all things, we ſhall live to the age of the primitive parents of mankind, and then we ſhall not tremble at revolutions.'

'Oh that the glorious days were come!' ſaid he with a ſneer, 'when the dagger and the rope ſhall loſe their deſtructive qualities, when the muſket, the ſword, and the pike ſhall rebound from the boſom of the patriot, and the cannon ball, in place of flying onwards, winged with death, ſhall fall harmleſs to the ground—then, and not till then, ought we to ruſh into revolutions.'

'But

'But truth,' cried I, 'truth is omnipotent, of which this very day is an example.'

'Which way?' ſaid he. 'I know you have ſenſe, though at preſent it is warped. You call by the name of truth that which ſtimulates ignorant people to outrage: but you forget that all men are not cool philoſophers, that the great maſs of mankind are enamoured of novelty. The very buſtle of a riot or a revolution has for them equal charms with a horſe-race or a bull-baiting, and the merits of the ſubject are never diſcuſſed till they ſmart under the conſequences. What can be more eaſy than to lead people to deſire to live without labour, to plunder the rich, and pay no regard to thoſe laws which were made purpoſely to reſtrain the paſſions? And becauſe this is eaſy to be done, you call it truth and liberty, and patriotiſm. But I would aſk one ſober queſtion, and would to God

God the whole world could hear me. If ſimple nature, poverty, and equality is the natural ſtate of man, why do reformers wiſh to deprive the rich of their wealth, to render the poor unhappy? A plain argument that all they want is to plunder the rich, and, under a maſk of mock patriotiſm, deſtroy all thoſe ſacred bonds which give energy to genius, and encouragement to virtue. If they have the real welfare of mankind at heart, in the eſtabliſhment of equality, and deteſt (as they are always pretending) cruelty and bloodſhed, it would be very eaſy to eſtabliſh themſelves in America.'

'But monopoliſers,' cried I; 'are they to be ſuffered to prey on the entrails of ſociety? What right has one man to eat a pine-apple, for which he gave a guinea, when another is ſtarving for want of an half-penny worth of bread? Anſwer me this——.'

'Few

'Few things can be more eaſily done,' replied he. 'In the firſt place I would obſerve, that the incident never happened but in imagination, drawn for the purpoſe of caſting an odium upon the rich, they do not in general deſerve. Secondly, the accumulation of individual property is the natural and certain conſequence of ſociety. It is to be ſeen in the ſtate of ſavagiſm, where an induſtrious Indian ſhall poſſeſs good arms, while an idle one ſhall be almoſt without. In the ſtate of equality, that is, ignorant barbariſm, no pine-apples would be cultivated. How many depend for their ſhare of the guinea paid for the pine-apple? The fruiterer, the gardener, the glazier, the carpenter, the bricklayer, the ſmith, the coal-merchant, the mariner, the miner, with all the crowd of others who ſupply each of theſe individuals with materials; and when you ſhall have divided the guinea between all theſe, I think the gentleman may eat his

his pine-apple with a good conſcience, unleſs you can prove that he ought to give half of it to the vagabond, who will not work to provide himſelf food.—To ſtate your queſtion right, you ſhould aſk which is the greater good, to aid all thoſe tradeſmen and their dependents, by encouraging the luxury, or to give the ſuperfluous guinea to the ſupport of unproductive idleneſs? There is another queſtion frequently aſked—What right, ſay they, have the rich to tax the poor? What right have they to live by the labour of the poor? The real fact is, that they do not live by the labour of the poor, but *vice verſa;* for were there no high people to pay the poor for working, there would be no work done. What bricklayer would build a houſe without being paid? What labourer would work for him without hire? *The benefit is reciprocal to both parties;* but, to ſpeak a truth, the rich, wrapped as they are in eaſe and indolence, would do much better

better without the poor, than the poor without them. As to taxes, the poor in this country pay very few in proportion to the rich; their cottages are exempt, they are not vaſſals who work without pay (as in moſt countries of the world), and thoſe who wiſh to live in peace, may do it with as much ſecurity as a lord; their perſons, and their little all are equally ſacred in the eye of the law, and except in the article of game, *equally free*. It is the drunken, the idle, and the vicious, who have their families ſtarving, and a burden to the pariſh. But ſuch is the ſingular conſtitution of the country, that no Engliſhman can die of abſolute want, if he will appeal to the charitable inſtitutions. In fact, it is the middle claſs of people who bear the great burden of the ſtate: the poor are exactly the ſame as they were a thouſand years ago, and were, and will be always the ſame under every form of government, with the exception of perſonal freedom and

and protection. It is to be remembered that taxes ought never to be murmured at, provided they are applied to public affairs. I am, however, grieved when I reflect that the upright, peaceable, and loyal citizen pays at leaſt one-third more than his juſt portion, to make up the deficiency occaſioned by the ſneaking, miſerly part of the rich; and by the mock patriot evading every impoſt he can flinch from—thus ſtabbing the country he pretends to weep over.'

'But,' replied I, 'it is a groſs and ridiculous error, to ſuppoſe that the rich pay for any thing: there is no wealth in the world except this—the labour of man. * So that when a man of property pretends he is rewarding the labourer, he is cheating him, he is giving him a bauble, and cajoling him. If he employ them in erecting palaces, in ſinking ca-

* Enquirer, page 175.

nals,

nals, &c. it will be found he is their enemy; he is adding to the weight of oppreſſion, and the vaſt accumulation of labour, by which they are already ſunk beneath the level of brutes."

'From this doctrine,' ſaid Lord B—, 'it follows, that the leſs employ given to mankind, the greater is their happineſs, and the greater your benevolence; and the Eaſtern Baſhaw, who graſps every accumulation of property, deſtroys the ſpeculations of commerce, arts, ſciences, and agriculture, reducing men to the happy ſtation of providing no more than juſt ſufficient to ſupport exiſtence, is, in your ſyſtem, the benefactor of the human race.'

I know not how it was, I felt all my ideas unorganiſed, and I endeavoured in vain to reply: though what could be more *trite*, illiberal, and common place. The country people who had liſtened to

this diſcourſe, one and all proteſted they were grieved at their offence, declaring, that they now ſaw plainly how much better it was to receive the wages for their labour in cultivating the ground, than to keep it barren, and of uſe to nobody, at the ſame time offering, the next day, to replace the hedges they had thrown down.

'And to conclude this adventure,' ſaid the young nobleman, 'let this unfortunate man be liberated; and I hope he will yet be convinced of the folly of deſtroying one ſyſtem, which has *ſome faults*, with *many beauties*, and in its place propoſing another, which has not one ſingle *practical beauty*, but is pregnant with the moſt deteſtable and dreadful evils.'

Being at liberty to proceed on my journey, I left Lord B—— and his train of ſlaves. Continuing along the road by

by moon-light, and having leiſure to recollect the apophthegms of Stupeo, I was angry with myſelf that I had not contradicted every aſſertion made by Lord B——, and proved that his reaſonings were falſe in *toto*.

I was rouſed from theſe reflections by the creakings of a gibbet on the highway, and could not avoid ſhuddering at the inhuman ſpectacle.

'O property!' ſaid I, 'this is one of thy bleſſed effects—what a dreadful exhibition of injuſtice glares upon the thinking mind, that death ſhall be the fate of the man who by force exerts the rights of nature. In the Principles of Penal Law, we are told near an hundred perſons annually are executed. Oh ye victims of this infernal monopoliſing ſcheme, the whole amount of the goods (vulgarly called ſtolen) is only three-fourths per cent. upon moveable pro-

perty, yet they hang you up on the high-way. Perhaps you were obliged to ſhoot ſomebody in ſelf-defence, and muſt ye die for that? Can we wonder at the miſeries of ſociety, when luxury and trade are riſen to ſo enormous an amount, that the aggregate of property brought to the city of London, and moved in floating bottoms only, is annually ſeventy millions, out of which only about four millions are taken in plunder, only four millions reduced to the laws of equality. There is, indeed, a bright gleam breaking through this dark picture, which enables the private patriot to tax the property of theſe dealers in wealth; this is the article of *baſe coin*, amounting, it is true, to no more than one million a year *. Let us a moment contemplate this mighty

* See the excellent Treatiſe on the Police of the Metropolis, which, though certainly exaggerated in ſome of the calculations, deſerves the attention of every man.

Coloſſus

Coloſſus of property, which threatens to devour up the Rights of Man, and reſiſt all the open and ſecret attacks of philoſophers, and we ſhall ſee how neceſſary it is by every means to render property leſs ſecure. Let us reaſon calmly, and without prejudice, and to any man of liberal ideas, what is the moral turpitude of robbery? It is no more than taking by force what I have a natural right to: it is an heroic and generous way of exerting the claims of nature and Agrarian juſtice; and the hazard I run is the ſame as every patriot muſt lay open to, who excites revolutions, and proclaims the glad tidings of univerſal emancipation. The one, as well as the other, is deteſted by all men who are blinded by religion, and the prejudices of the old ſchool. It becomes, therefore, the part of every patriot, who would nobly reſiſt oppreſſion, to begin by counteracting the unjuſt diſtribution of property; and

were they all to a man boldly and heroicly to ſet out on the high road, they would ſoon render wealth leſs ſecure, and its poſſeſſors leſs arrogant. It may be objected, that this would not be ſo manly as at once throwing off the yoke of bondage: but till the *march* of ſentiment has proceeded to univerſal conviction, the next greateſt good ought to be preferred to liſtleſs inactivity."

Such were my reflections while I ſtood gazing at the gibbet: I ridiculed the idea that it would act as a reſtraint: it was in my eyes like the mangled body of Cæſar, which only ſtimulated to revenge. I conſidered the poor victim as unjuſtly maſſacred by the iron-fiſted law, for though he had committed murder, that was no reaſon for coercion in the code of political juſtice.

My

My mind was impreſſed with a majeſtic and independent tone, reſulting from thoſe ideas. I felt myſelf arouſed to ſome arduous exploit, and a poſt-chaiſe driving towards me, gave me an opportuity to emulate the valour of an Alexander, or a Charles the Twelfth.

I drew out my piſtols, and marched forward along the middle of the road, which the poſtillion perceiving, ſpurred his horſes, with an intention to ride over me. With a ſtroke of my oak-ſtick I brought him down, and graſping the reins, retained the horſes. The gentleman immediately fired, and miſſing me, I returned the ſhot, and a loud ſcream from a female cauſed me to think it took place. The horſes taking fright, tore away from my graſp, and rode over the poſtillion, who was much bruiſed, and had one leg broke.

This

This unfortunate accident extremely chagrined me, but I conſoled myſelf as much as poſſible with remembering, that partial evil will ever attach to general good. The *immortal* Stupeo, before he died, uſed to obſerve, that Nature, in her fecundity, produced all things in ſuperfluity, that much might be ſpared for the deſtruction of accident. As in the produce of animals and vegetables; and man, being nothing but a brute, was alſo ſupplied in greater numbers than ſufficient; in fact, that the death of two or three hundred thouſand was a matter of no moment, and abſolutely unworthy to fill the mind's eye a ſecond in the contemplation of a great event.

Theſe arguments were clear as the broad baſe of truth; for what man could walk out on a ſummer's day, if he feared cruſhing the inſects in his path?

Or

Or who could look coolly upon a revolution, if they valued the lives of individuals, who muſt be cruſhed by the ebullitions of the moment*.

I rejoiced that my mind was ſuperior to prejudice, and continued forward, after this little accident, with an high flow of ſpirits. I was on foot, and walked ſlowly on, forgetting, that by this outrage (as it is vulgarly called) I rendered myſelf liable to account, when I heard behind me the clattering of horſes. It was totally dark, and ſtepping a little from the road, that they might not run over me, I ſtuck in a muddy ditch on one ſide.

* The reader muſt obſerve the difference of the Vagabond's ſentiments, which is the exact language of modern Jacobins. If one of their own party ſuffers for his crimes, it is a maſſacre, and muſt be revenged by the moſt ſanguine examples; but if thouſands are murdered by their own party, it is then a petty ebullition of liberty—nothing, compared to the great object they aim at.

The

The plaſhing I made to clear myſelf caught their ears, and they quickly ſurrounded me ordering me to ſurrender. I was in no ſituation to contend, for I could not extricate myſelf. I threw my piſtols over the hedge into a thicket of whins, and replied, that they might uſe me as they pleaſed, for death was infinitely preferable to ſlavery.

I was conducted back on horſeback ſeveral miles, to the neareſt inn, where I was uſhered into a large kitchen. It was now very late, being near three in the morning, ſo that only two maid-ſervants were there, with the three perſons who had caught me. One, who had the appearance of a gentleman, turned me to the light to examine my features, when I inſtantly knew him to be my father.

'Great God!' exclaimed he, 'who do

do I ſee? What dreadful fate is this? Why did I not die before I had beheld this hour? But for a trembling hand I ſhould have killed my ſon! and that ſon would have been ſpared the guilt of murdering his mother!'

A cold damp ſweat gathered on my brow. I was unmanned in a moment, notwithſtanding every effort I could make to preſerve my reſolution.—'Was it not imprudent,' ſaid I, 'to travel at this hour? What buſineſs had you upon the road? And how could I know you in the dark from another?'

'Ill-ſtarred boy,' ſaid he, ſhedding tears; 'Providence directed your arm againſt your parents, that you might behold, in full light, the horror of your actions, and repent!'

'Nonſenſe,' cried I, recovering at this impeachment of truth. 'Do you not

not know, that, in the eye of a man of ſenſe, relations are no more connected than the greateſt ſtrangers? Would Rome ever have been a republic, had Brutus recoiled from ordering his own children to execution? Would Cæſar have fallen, had the ſecond Brutus been tied by the name of friend? Or would any revolution happen, if brothers, and fathers, and ſons, feared to plunge the dagger in each others boſom? The mind which cannot leap over theſe paultry and prejudiced conſiderations, is not inſpired with genuine patriotiſm: we muſt learn only to appreciate perſons by their intrinſic value, and not by their titles, nominations, and connections*.

* I would obſerve, that *I* never perſonally knew a republican who did not ſupport this doctrine; there may be thoſe who do not, but I never found them.

My father, during this ſpeech, had thrown himſelf upon a chair, holding his head in an agony of emotion, which I did not wonder at, conſidering his prejudices; and I regretted myſelf, that ſo little good had been produced by an action, which, had it occurred in full day, amidſt a tumultuous people, and in the buſtle of a revolution, would have rendered me eternally immortal, and handed my name down to the remoteſt poſterity as a dread to tyrants, and a *text* to all declaimers on the ſufferings of human nature: as it was, it was only like ſeed ſcattered in ſterile ground, unproductive and obſcure.

'What ſhall I do?' cried my father, ſuddenly ſtarting up. 'Shall I, for the ſake of ſevere, but immutable juſtice, become the inſtrument of vengeance on my ſon? Shall I adopt his own maxims, and rend at once all the tender ties of nature? Shall I burſt all thoſe fine bands

bands asunder, and consign him to public execution? O heaven! can such a sacrifice be required of me, for having given existence to such a monster? No, no, get from my sight! fly! fly to the desarts of the world! beyond the boundaries of society, lest the earth open and swallow you alive.'

'See,' said I, calmly, 'what it is to be agitated with all these puerile feelings of kindred; they unman the soul, and when we should reason rationally, overwhelm us in a vortex of passion. I am not so prejudiced as to refuse that portion of liberty you offer me: I will go, because I do not think that I have yet fulfilled the great mission I have undertaken. In the present instance, I do not see how the good of mankind can be promoted by my death: till we can see this, we ought never voluntarily to march to the scaffold, or, as the immortal Stupeo said——'

'Per-

"Perdition ſtrike him to the centre," cried my father, flaming with fury.

It is a folly to attempt reaſoning with madmen; and ſeeing the two countrymen debating whether they ſhould allow me to paſs, I put on a determined air, and walked calmly out of the houſe. There is ſomething impoſing and aweful in the frown of a determined man, conſcious of his *innocence*; and I have little doubt but an hundred would have ſuffered me to paſs with equal impunity.

I ſoon ſhook off the chagrin this little incident had occaſioned, and having recovered my priſtols, I thought it a matter of common precaution to ſtrike from the high road.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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